

**SEQUOYA  
REVIEW  
2007-2008**





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A JOURNAL like this is a unique project. In itself, it is certainly a piece of art, but it is not the product of one person's vision. It is representative of a community of artists. This is what makes a project like this so special, the fact that we can funnel UTC's creative spirit into one work, a work we can then share with the rest of the world. There are many students on this campus working to create fantastic paintings, photographs, poems, and stories. It makes me very happy that I have had the chance to work with the art department to create a journal to showcase them. It is my hope that the Review will grow. That everyone on campus will come to look for it each year. Quite frankly, our students deserve the recognition. Hopefully in the future students on other campuses will have the opportunity to discover this journal. That is what I think we should work towards. After reading, I am sure there will be little resistance towards this goal.

HAPPY READING

Charm



**ON THE COVER**    MCKINLEY BRYSON / map #4

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# CASEY YOSHIDA

3:1  
photographic print





# JOE McCORMICK

## MY LAST POEM

There are so many reasons we should all stop writing  
and go on with our lives. Now, I'm thinking how to break this line  
while somewhere, a man in a damp khaki jacket is breaking  
a small woman's back with the dull side of a machete.

I'm trying to save her life with a turn of phrase; in the middle,  
I get up, pour a glass of water, go to the bathroom,  
stare in the mirror, feeling embarrassed. Then I come back,  
and she's waiting there for me and it's like I made  
the whole thing up. Do you see what I mean?

Did Moses get up to go to the bathroom in the middle  
of the Exodus? Did he stare at his shadow in the sand  
and think about getting fat? Did he slap his wife  
in the face for interrupting his writing?

Now I'm thinking about this: Maybe I get up, pour a glass of water,  
go to the bathroom, then go out the front door, down the street,  
and behind a slanted wooden building and find the small,  
broken woman that I thought of, lying there in the gravel.  
I carry her to the hospital, where they tell me that I shouldn't  
have moved her, and that I probably made it worse. Now,  
I've helped break her back. Now, I am walking in circles

in the waiting room, wondering if she will walk again.

While I'm waiting, I flip through a picture Bible,  
go to the bathroom, go downstairs to the cafeteria.

Now, no matter what happens, I must deserve it.

This could have been anything that I wanted.

# HEIDI VASTERLING

NIEDLOV'S LOAF STUDY

oil and graphite on canvas





# STEPHEN BUSH

CONCRETE HAIKU

digital output on coffee coasters







# BRYCE LEE WYNN

## SAY IT

Light from the street lamp outside sliced through the slats of the bedroom blinds, casting an ethereal glow across the pale, naked form. It flooded every nook, corner, and crevice, spreading across the desk, the pencil, the opened notebook, the chair, the dirty tube sock accented in blue, the soiled, checked boxers, the bed, the body, the man. Stony eyes, a hint of life in their glazed-over irises, stared past the blinds, the window, the layer of frost, and out into the darkness.

Tugging at the white Jockeys sliding over thick, sweaty limbs, the man looked over his shoulder, scratching at the tangle of hair spanning the width of his stomach. He pulled on the white v-neck tee, a size too small, yellowed at the pits. His scent, dark, ripe, and pungent, hung heavily in the air, mixing with sweat, scented soap, muted cologne, dried semen, and blood. Starting, barefoot, across the hard wood, towards the bedroom door, he looked at the still form – a young boy, aged fifteen – lying across the tousled sheets. He placed his hand on the rusted knob, turned, and pulled the door open. He left.

The young boy, naked, sprawled limbs, contorted torso, clinched fists, and leaden visage, listened through potato chip-thin walls. He stirred, wanting to yell out. Wanting to run out of the room, down the steps, out of the house, into the street, somewhere, anywhere, any city, any town – any place but here. Wanting to let everybody know about the violation he experienced on a nightly basis but at the same time wanting to lock himself in the closet where no one would ever find him again. Wanting to shrivel up and die. Wanting to storm downstairs to kill the man he trusts more than any other man. Wanting it all to end.

He waited.



Twenty-two-year-old Tobias Lafferty-Winston wears a faded, green fedora pulled tightly over straight, loose hair that is dark-brown. He likes the way his dark-green shirt and a necktie with stripes of black, green, and pink contrasts against his pale skin. Tobias is handsome – the old Hollywood kind of handsome, harkening back to the days of Humphrey Bogart and Clark Gable. He fidgets with the necktie, loosening and tightening the fat knot.

"I think I need to sit down." Izzie Hansen stumbles across the threshold of her on campus apartment, kicking the silver stilettos from her small feet. Removing the matching shawl from around her bare shoulders, she throws it across the worn armchair just beyond the front door.



Tobias closes the door behind her and sheds his own dark-brown trench coat, placing it alongside the shawl. "Are you okay?" Loosening his tie, he pulls it from around his neck. She nods, her longish, dark hair falling in loose curls around her face. "God, my feet are killing me. Plus – I think I might be just a little tipsy." Giggling, she uses her thumb and index finger to indicate her condition. She walks over to the worn sofa and collapses onto it. Tugging at the hem of her black dress, she tucks her legs underneath her. She pats the space beside her. "Come sit, baby."

He removes his hat, places it on the coffee table next to the stack of fashion magazines and an ashtray, and takes a seat next to her. Kicking the wingtips from his feet, he leans into the comforting folds and dips of the sofa.

She leans over, running fingers through his hair. "Thanks for an amazing night. You do your homework, you pick the perfect restaurant – you never cease to amaze me, Tobias. I cannot believe it's been three years." She leans in and nuzzles along the length of his neck. "I – love – you – so – much." She punctuates each word with her lips along his jaw line, her kisses cool and wet. "I don't know what I'd do without you."

"I love you, too," he exhales, closing his eyes. She tugs at the collar of his shirt, pulling at the top button. Her lips on his, teeth tugging at his bottom lip, and his tongue prying at the entrance to her mouth. She relents, parting her teeth. Two buttons to go, she pulls the hem of his shirt from his pants and over his head.

He thinks she tastes like wine – sour wine. Her lips are bitter and dry. The ferocity of her kisses overwhelms him. His stomach churns. She's on top of him; dress hiked mid-thigh, bare skin against the soft fabric of his slacks. Her breathing is rapid intakes of air coupled with deep, almost inaudible moans.

"What's this?" she pants into his face. He feels her grip his thigh.

"Nothing," he whispers, pushing her hand away. He struggles underneath her.

She giggles and places her hand back at the spot on his thigh. Her breath is warm against his face, almost suffocating. He pulls her hand into his, away from his pocket. "Geez, baby, what is it? Come on." She snatches her hand from his and shoves it into his pocket. Plundering deep, she locates what she's felt and pulls it from its confines.

Tobias exhales, a guttural moan breaking the brief silence between them. He pulls himself from underneath her, rising to his feet. He walks across the room, watching as she examines the box. He runs his hands through sweaty, tousled hair, rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet.

"Oh – my – God," she whispers, running her fingertips along the felt of the box. She looks up, eyes dizzy with drunk, lust, and wonderment. Her lips part in an 'O'. She opens the box, looking at him and then the ring inside and then back at him. "Tobias, I – ." She removes the silver ring from the box, looking it over. "Marry me Izzie – oh my god. Tobias – shit. I am such an idiot. God." Her eyes find his. "You were planning on proposing – to me?"

He looks away, moving towards the nearby kitchen separated from the living area by a bar-style counter. Shoving his hands in pockets, he takes a deep breath, his heart banging in

his chest. "I-I was gonna propose. Yes – I was gonna propose to you, Izzie. Tonight at the restaurant. I was gonna ask you to marry me"

"My god – Tobias." Izzie returns the ring to its box and closes it. Standing up, she smooths out the front of her dress and walks over to where Tobias is standing. She places the ring down on the countertop and then places her hands on the sides of his arms. "Why – why didn't you do it, baby. I would have said yes. In a heartbeat."

"I know," he groans. "I know you would have said 'yes'."

"Then ask me right now. Ask me to marry you. Ask me right now and I'll say 'yes'. Just ask me."

He backs away, turning towards the refrigerator. He presses his hand against the cold surface of the refrigerator door, leaning into it. "I can't, Izzie. I want to so bad. It just hurts so bad, so fucking bad. I can't do this." He lowers his eyes to the floor. He doesn't want to see her face – not like this, not in this moment. "I love you so much, Izzie, but – I can't marry you." His body trembles, palms slick with sweat, warmth spreading across his body. He squeezes his eyes close, forcing wetness out through the corners.

"What's changed?" she asks after several moments pass. Her voice sounds so small to him.

Tobias runs the back of his hands over his eyes and sniffs. "Nothing's changed, Izzie. Nothing ever changes. That's the fucking problem."

"Was it something I did – something I said? What did I do?"

He feels her behind him now, her breath against the back of his neck. Her arms encircle his waist. She leans into him, her face against the warmth of his t-shirt. Dampness seeps through the white of the shirt; sticky warmth. He can smell the sourness of her breath, warm, sticky sourness. Her scent hangs heavily in the air: a mixing of sweat, scented soap muted cologne.

He pulls away from her, acid stinging the back of his throat. In one dizzying motion, he heaves and splatters against the scarred, hardwood floor. Doubled over, he swipes the back of his hand against his damp, sticky mouth, wiping the warm remnants away.

"Tobias, what's wrong? Are you okay? Tobias – Tobias?"

He pushes past her, nearly stumbling over a chair, his vision tunneled towards the front door. He quickly pulls on his shoes and moves towards the door. "I have to do something, Izzie."

"Do what, Tobias? Why can't you just tell me what's going on. You're scaring me."

The house stands at the end of a street dotted with aged elms with bare branches. The familiar black pickup sits in its usual spot, in the graveled drive beside the home. The place had promised to be a home. Ten years later, it's anything but. A hollowed shell of coldness. That's what Tobias thinks of the house at the end of Woodland Pass. Nothing's changed. Tonight it will.



He stumbles across the yard, his shoes damp against the cool, dead grass. He passes the oak he'd spent many summers lying against, writing. The night air blew across his reddened face in sharp bursts, like so many straight-pens prickling against his skin. He folds his arms tightly across his chest as he steps onto the first step leading up to the front door.

His mother had long ago moved from the house, but proof of her one-time existence remains in the form of a worn, faded welcome mat and a couple of dusty wind chimes hanging above the door. The porch lamp is turned on, shedding light on several candle-flies buzzing about the porch. He stands before the door, envisioning David and Goliath. Balling his hand into a fist, he raps twice against the splintered front door, the knock deafening in the silent dark.

He hears heavy footfalls approaching. He knows them. He'd spent many nights listening to them in the upstairs hallway. He'd sit, curled underneath the covers, just listening.

He listens to the turn of a lock and the unlatching of a deadbolt. He steadies himself.

The door creaks open; the silhouette of a large man framed in the doorway.

A shock of gray-brown stands atop his head, eyes wide, his straight teeth a brilliant white. The wide belly is gone. Billy Winston looks almost the same. He stands there, eyes focused on Tobias.

"Well shit – you the last person I expected to wind up on my doorstep, Tobias." He scratches at the natty beard growing along his jaw line. He steps out of the doorway, and makes an ushering gesture. "Comon' in, kid. It's cold out there."

Tobias shoves his hands in his pockets and wills himself to move. He starts through the door, pass the front door, and into the foyer. He looks around the room. A thin coating of dust lines every nook, corner, crevice, orifice, spreading across the room – the desk, the pencil, the opened notebook, the chair, the dirty blue sock accented in blue, the pair of soiled, checked boxers, the bed, the body, and the man. He shakes his head and looks up as Billy closes the door.

Billy moves past him and towards the kitchen. "Want something to drink?"

"No." He stands in the center of the room. He doesn't want to touch anything. The place feels diseased.

"How's your mother?" he calls from the kitchen. A few moments later, he emerges from the kitchen, bottle of Miller High Life in hand. He moves over to where Tobias is standing and looks him over. He turns the bottle up, spilling the contents into his mouth. "She still with that guy?"

Tobias can smell his breath, burning with beer and the stench of tobacco. Coarse tufts of wispy hair creep from underneath the sleeves of his shirt. His scent is strong – dark, ripe, and pungent.

Tobias swallows. The burning acid returns to the back of his throat. He closes his eyes, willing the sensation away.

"You okay, Tobias?" Billy asks, gnawing at lip of the bottle.

"Shit, Billy," he snaps. "Just stop with it."

Billy frowns, brow furrowing in contempt. He places the beer down on a nearby surface.

"Why the hell are you here, Tobias?"

Tobias scratches his head, his hair slick with perspiration. "I came to tell you that I'm planning on asking this girl to marry me."

"Oh," Billy answers. He looks away, focusing in on a dark spot on the wall next to him. "Is this the same girl you were dating –?"

"No, this girl is different. Her name's Izzie Hansen and I plan on asking her to marry her, and I want to marry her but you see I can't get around to doing that. Tonight's our three-year anniversary - I had it all planned, you know. I got the ring, I had the restaurant all picked out – I was gonna do it tonight. But I couldn't. Every time I think about me being with her you ruin everything – you just fuck it all up and I can't do it."

Tobias walks towards him, narrowing the gap between them. His brown eyes bore into those cold, steely blue ones of Billy's. His entire body feels electrified. In a sudden movement, he grabs the collar of Billy's tee and jerks him forward. The two are inches apart, Billy's breath hot against his lips. "You just fuck everything up for me, Billy. Everything."

"Boy, get your fucking hands off me," Billy growls. He pulls himself from Tobias's grasp, and pushes him to the floor. "What the fuck has gotten into you, boy? I ain't ever raised a hand against you but I swear to god if you ever come at me like that again, I will beat the shit out of you, boy."

Tobias lies on the grimy linoleum, looking up into the face of the man he once trusted more than any other man. A smile peeks at the corners of his mouth. "You ain't ever raised a hand against me? You lying sack of shit. You lying fucking asshole. How many times did you beat the shit out of my mom? You never raised a hand against me? My mom left you because you couldn't keep your fucking hands off of me. You – raped – me."

"What the fuck do you want from me, Tobias? What do you want?" Billy's nostrils flare.

"I want you to say that you're sorry for fucking up my life. I want you to say that." The tears started. He was a fifteen again. He was back in his old bedroom, upstairs. It was the two of them again, he and Billy. He slowly stands up, fists clenched at sides, face stricken with dampness and redness. "I can't do this, Billy. I can't do this until you say it. I can't move on with my life until you apologize for doing all of that shit you did to me back then. Say it. Say it, Billy."

Billy's jaw trembles. His mouth opens. It closes.

Tobias takes a breath. He closes his eyes. A silence falls between the two of them. He opens his eyes – finds Billy staring at him. He envisions a man, several years younger, thinner, with longish light-brown hair and gentle blue eyes. Tobias dusts off the front of his

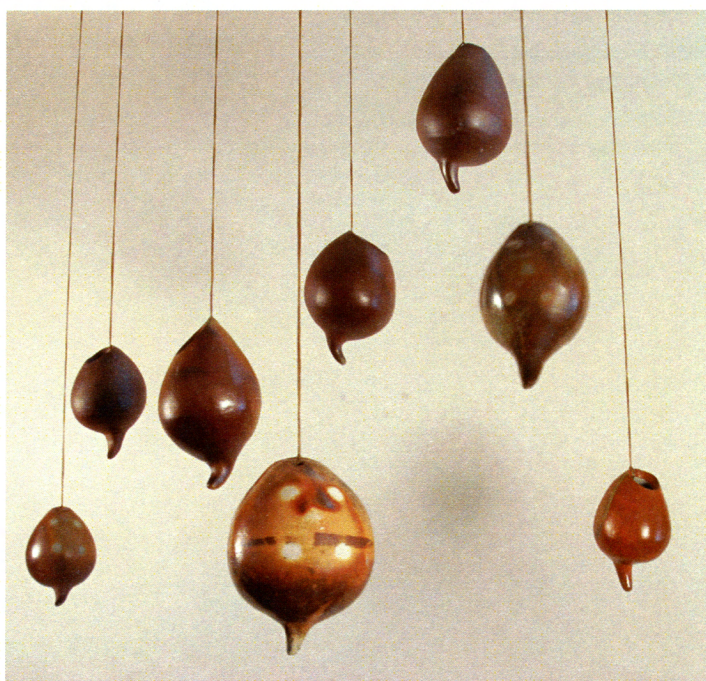
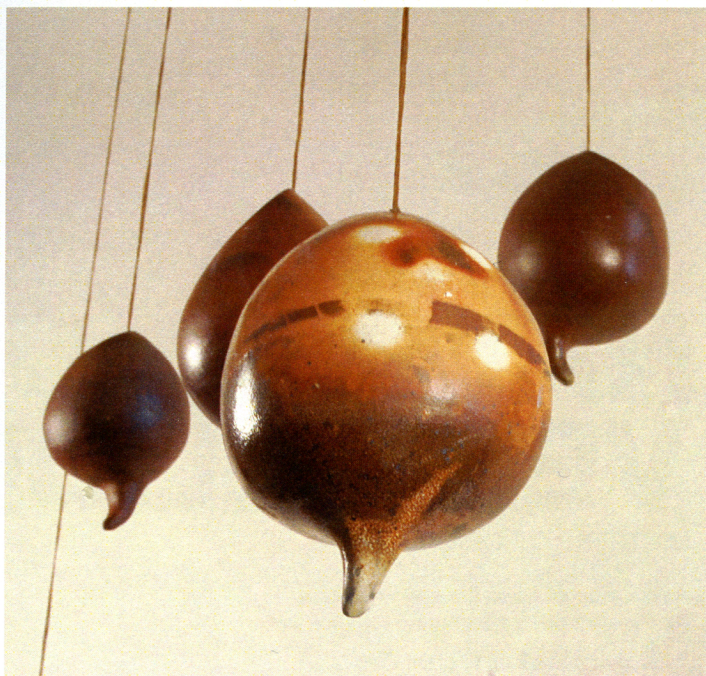




# JESSICA LOWE

356 AM. PM.  
soda fired dark stoneware





# NATALIE VERMILLION

## MISTRESS OF ORION

As the drought hates the quenching rain  
As the stars never hear my plea to be a victim

I'd sooner make love to great Orion  
Than beseech him for your attention

I fear to be devoured just as stars  
Swallow and purge the darkness of night

I sit on Egypt's arid sands until  
The stars start flirting with the moon

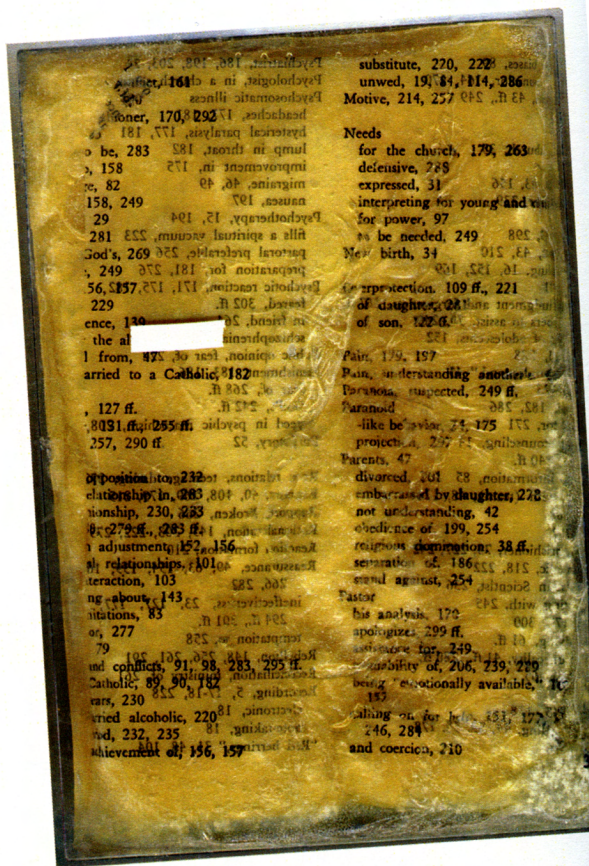
Brilliance drowned long ago  
Pretending still to be beautiful

While continents away from you,  
I think they must be fresh coquettish fools



# REBECCA TARG

ECONOMY 1: OUTSIDE, INSIDE  
acrylic, glycerin, paper, felt







# CHELSEA COX

## LAUREL CANYON

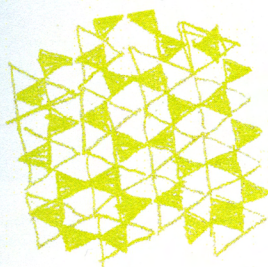
Psychedelic colors dance on the walls  
 Outshone in their brightness  
 By rowdy kids with spiked hair  
 Slamming into one another, falling away  
 I hope mom doesn't notice I'm gone

Young girls smelling of spearmint gum  
 Bop around the dance floor blindly  
 Like the dancing flowers from Fantasia  
 Perspiration glows on their pale skin  
 Like early morning dew clinging to a flower

Catching eyes with him across the room  
 All leather, studs, acne and attitude  
 I get the deep-heart feeling like a balloon  
 Rising from my stomach to my throat  
 A wink signals me to meet him outside

I can't hear car horns, don't notice the sleeping drunk  
 All I see is him lighting a cigarette, taking a drag  
 He says nothing, smiles, offers me a hit  
 I breathe in the poison fire hoping I don't cough  
 My tongue tasting the paper he laid his lips on

Will you take me home now?  
 The night-time California air is too humid  
 The deep-heart feeling, I hug him tighter  
 His smooth leather is cold on my face  
 I hope on the back of his bike and hold on tight.





# BEKKA REESE

6 PANEL OULIPO  
digital output

IF I COULD I WOULD  
SHRINK MYSELF - SINK  
THROUGH YOUR SKIN TO  
YOUR BLOOD CELLS  
REMOVE WHATEVER MAKES  
YOU HURT - BUT I  
AM TOO WEAK TO  
BE YOUR CURE...



...over time...

...in related thought  
...the date  
...without the  
...equality

...it's used only when  
...first clause is  
...completed, then  
...that you've privi-  
...can give us all it

A good tip: The colon is roughly equivalent to *that is* or *namely*.

Just sometimes a writer, riding redundancy, will want to spell that out, using either of those phrases in conjunction with the colon.

Nothing else is so likely to teach us what at this moment we most need to learn: namely, that more than one can be actually and thus we seem to be aware and that for as pure as it may be intended the best is that whose texture is firmly derivative and which can, as a statement, stand firm on its own legs.

—Joseph Wood Krutch

In such cases as this, the colon really isn't necessary; a comma before and after *namely* would be equally grammatical. The sentence is a long one, though, and Mr. Krutch apparently decided that his readers would welcome some of a break that this comma would have provided. I think he was right. It's an awkward sentence.

The basic use of the colon, then, is to signify that *is* or *namely*.

But when the colon introduces a list or series, its meaning changes to the following or *as follows*.

Here again a writer can spell it out, using the phrase itself as well as the colon, or simply let the colon do its job alone—like this:

The best methods of combating organized crime are:

1. Calling the criminals out or not at all.
2. Calling the police whenever an unusual number of men from the Hoffman Laundry Company begin singing in your foyer.
3. Wandering.

—Woody Allen

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# MATT ZINGG

PATERSON

The seventeen year old boy with the pock marked face who returns the books to their respective space found him asleep, dreaming between history and pre-history. Paterson was dreaming about his grandmother. They used to shuck green beans together. She would say, moving her automatic leather hands from one end of the bean to the other, "this un a biggin," and he'd help her hang the laundry too, but he never liked the smell of line-dried clothes. Or they'd sit and talk about water moccasins and rattlesnakes and snapping turtles. But Paterson had never seen either. He only found little gray frogs and once a rattlesnake's skin. He gave it to his grandmother. Paterson also found a coffee can, beneath the kitchen sink, empty except for a layer of bacon fat at the bottom. He took it out back and laid it on its side. With his grandfather's pellet gun, he shot into the can. Seeing the greasy plop of the pellets hitting the fat was pleasant. He would pull the trigger and a hole, the width of an infant's smallest finger, would appear in the fat. It was magical. This was the same gun his grandfather used to kill rabid squirrels and the occasional gopher, luck provided, and this was pleasant to see as well; the pull of the trigger, the exhale of air and the dust leaving the barrel, then the animal jumping up, falling down and twitching on the ground, bleeding from its neck. His grandfather was efficient, but he didn't have to be. He would be happy to shoot a deer in the gut, if he caught it eating the corn.

When his grandmother found him, peppering her bacon fat with pellets, she carried him into the house and spanked him. She told him that that fat was used to make her cornbread. He did not like the smell of line-dried clothes but he did like his grandmother's cornbread. And he cried while his grandmother cried too.

These were the things Paterson thought about, earlier, on the walk to the library and now, between history and pre-history, he was dreaming about his grandmother again; walking with her down the gravel road that ran from their house and into the fields. The road was littered with small gray frogs. It must have just rained. They were talking about snakes and turtles; eating blue berries and chewing on mint leaves with the sound of gopher bombs in the background. In the middle of their farm was a pond-lake with a dock, swaying in the water. His grandmother stopped here and crouched down. She pointed to a large spider that had just caught a large grass hopper. The spider wrapped it up quick and deliberately. "Thoser biggins," his grandmother said. Then her eyes rolled back into their sockets and she began to speak Latin. Or at least what he thought was Latin. He could not understand her. He had never taken Latin in high school. Paterson took Spanish.

So that is where the pock marked boy found Paterson and tapped him on the shoulder and he sort of jumped. The boy told him that the library was closing, that it was now eight o'clock and that at eight o'clock every night the library closes. Except on Sundays. Then it closes at six.

Outside the streets were foggy. And wet with greasy rainbow puddles. It must have just rained. There were novels Paterson read that took place in settings like these. He chose left and headed down the foggy and wet road, which led to his house. It was also the way to his favorite bar. It was owned by a man named Rick, who had named his bar "Johnny's." When he opened the door to Rick's bar, or Johnny's, he was met by a loud voice that belonged to a large man with a large mustache. That man was known as Albert and he was old and forgetful, and he liked to shout things out. He was the only other regular customer besides Paterson. "I cannot answer that without consulting my personal accountant" is what he was yelling tonight. Paterson took a seat next to him and Albert sort of jumped. This is what he said to Paterson:

Damn. Shit. I thought you were dead, Jackie Boy. Caught up in the axel of a big rig semi truck.

This is what Paterson said to Albert, with his big voice and mustache and the personal accountant: Excuse me?

When Paterson was through explaining that he was not the person Albert thought he was, Albert said that was good, because he had freaked the hell out of him. Then he bought Paterson a drink. A whiskey and ice drink. And they talked about water and presidents and about war with darker people. Paterson asked Albert if he had ever been to war. Albert, with his loud mustache, sort of, choked, with amusement, on his whiskey and ice. Christ. Hell no he had never been to war. He said he didn't participate in war and he said, quite drunkenly, that he would be damned and would rather move to Canada than have some yuppie suit, younger than the crotch stain on his underwear, tell him he has to fight, not to mention fighting for some thing he didn't believe in. Fuck that is what Albert said. Fuck all of that. I'm my own goddamn man, no one else's. Paterson considered this and said he agreed.

But Paterson had participated in war. He had shot some guilty men. He had shot some innocent men too. He was efficient, like his grandfather. He could shoot a man in the neck and watch him jump back onto the ground, bleeding and dead. Or if he wanted to he could shoot him in the gut and watch him crawl away trying to keep blood and little bits of their entrails from escaping. Once, he blew a woman's belly out because she wouldn't stop crying. Another soldier had just raped her. Her children started to cry after that, but Paterson refused to shoot them, saying they needed to conserve ammunitions. The children would eventually die on their own time. These things made no difference to him. Nothing did, not even guilt, because death was the best ending to any story. That is what his commanding officer said to him. And that dirt was the best destiny any man could ask for. Paterson did this all according to the military's payroll. Killing those dark men, blowing their wives to pieces was going to pay his way through school. That is, after all, the reason for his enlist-



ing when he was eighteen. Nothing made more sense than death in the name of education. Besides, it was either enlist or play basketball. He, unfortunately, could not play basketball.

Suddenly Albert, with his large mustache and his loud voice and his personal accountant was making Paterson nauseous. His mustache seemed to grow grotesquely into his mouth. It began wriggling on its own and little drops of saliva and whiskey hung around the edges. Albert face became distant and foreign and didn't appear to belong any where near Paterson. The face was too disgustingly human, drinking in and spitting out, pounding a bottle on the bar, laughing and farting. By now the stool was useless but Paterson held on to it because the floor was beginning to drop out. His feet were dangling in thin air. His hands shook feverishly causing his whole body to tremble. This could not last long. Paterson stood up and vomited whiskey and ice, and a small piece of hot dog, onto Albert's shoes.

They were nice shoes. They were white with black on the toe and heel. Like riding shoes. And really white and clean and really shiny.

That was before the vomit. After the vomit, the giant mustache asked Paterson what the hell all that was about, speaking not so calmly and dripping whiskey spit. Paterson did not answer. He just sort of jumped out of the seat and shuffled out of the bar; with his hand he was trying to keep little acidic chunks of hot dog and whiskey and ice from escaping his mouth. After a vomit like that he would never return to Johnny's again. He didn't think Rick would be happy to see him after dirtying those clean floors and those clean shoes

Poor Rick. Or was it Johnny.

Once when Paterson was twelve, his grandparents took him to visit his great-great-great grandparents, who lived in an overgrown graveyard twenty or so miles from the farm. They were Scottish immigrants who came here to be farmers, which was something they knew nothing about. They died penniless. Paterson's grandfather told him all of this because he was interested in genealogy. His grandfather was also a millionaire and knew plenty about farming. Among the gravestones, most too weathered to be read, Paterson found a spider with a web hanging above some one's head. His name was Everett P. Waldo, and he was true and loyal to his wife and children, and a shrewd successful business man. Paterson found a grasshopper too, among the gravestones, and threw it into the spider's web that hung above Waldo's head. The grasshopper was wrapped up quickly and in a deliberate manner. "Thoser biggins" his grandmother said over his shoulder. Later his grandfather told Paterson that Waldo was a shameful man and that he should never trust those with first names for last.

Paterson's great-great-great grandfather's name was Elmer D. Sparks.

On the foggy and wet street, the air made him feel better. There were little islands of rainwater and light sparkling in the black ocean of asphalt, and all the street lamps had warm sulfur golden halos around their heads, exposing the fog that prowled the sidewalks. They were like stick figure angels and the one watching over Paterson suddenly winked out. He was tired but did not yet want to return home. So he did not turn left outside the bar, which was the way to his house, but instead walked straight across the street and into the park. He

had rolled a joint before he left home that afternoon and decided that now he wanted, no, needed to smoke. It would ease these nerves is what he said to himself. He chose his favorite bench, one that faced away from the path and the street (and the bar) and looked over the pond-lake that centered the park. Paterson lit the joint and began to think. Puff. Puff.

Here is what he thought of:

He was remembering a girl he used to know intimately. She had red hair with freckles and was very pretty. Two days ago, the very pretty girl had called him. It was the first time in three years they had talked and her voice was crystal clear and without a worry. She was so happy is what she told him. Why, Paterson asked in his muddy muddy voice. Because, she said, she was getting married. He told her that he was happy for her, and he agreed to be there to see the very pretty girl with the red hair and freckles marry the man she loved. She said goodbye and he hung up, and then he went into the bathroom and vomited. This time the vomit was all water and peanut butter, and little bits of whiskey. Paterson lied. He never went to the wedding and he never saw the very pretty girl again. Her name was Emma. There was no particular reason why he didn't go to the wedding, except that the idea hurt too much. Despite that fact, he couldn't explain to himself why the idea hurt so much. He had a hunch. He figured that maybe he was still in love with her. On the park bench, he told himself that no, he was not still in love with her. It was, he thought, that no one was in love with him. Puff. Puff. Poor Paterson.

Two days ago, when Emma called, Paterson was watching a television special on Big Foot. He was imagining himself trouncing through the forest, picking blueberries and minding his own business. He thought about being caught by the camera and how alien it must look; how alien he must look. A smudgy pillar of fur sulking along swinging his long arms like a schoolchild.

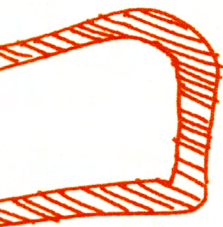
How are you doing? The freckled girl asked.

Paterson said he was watching television and she said that was what he was doing not how he was doing. Paterson looked straight forward avoiding the camera's lens, whipping his arms up and down with matted hair rising and falling in waves.

Oh, he said. Numb. How's that? Does that work for you?

Now, on the park bench, he was thinking about what it meant to be a numb ghost or a furry apparition. In a movie, he saw once, the main character described it, saying that no body would look at him, maybe for fear of contamination, of catching what he now had. A disease of some sort. So being a ghost was like being a leper. Where and when, he wondered had he picked up this disease. Did he scratch his knee in the woods and did it set in like an infection, but much slower. Because he had never seen it coming. Or did he get it from sleeping in alleyways with bums. He was sure he felt their coughs on him, on the back of his neck, and he was sure they were all ghosts. At least for their sakes, no one called on them to say that their ex-spouse was getting





married. That call was like the final diagnosis, the doctor's finger, he thought, looming in, almost amused, taken aback, reminding him that he wasn't dead. He was just a shell of something formally alive. This, he imagined, was what it was like to have your insides shot gunned out. The doctor, of course, was wearing latex gloves. Sorry, is what he said, there is nothing we can do.

Instead of shades of black and gray, he used to be in color. There weren't always these bags hanging below his eyes or this paunch in his belly. He had once been content to be alone and he was never bored. Once, everything in his life was exciting and he had no doubts as to its directions. It all made sense. But now everything made him sick and nothing made sense. To the very pretty girl with the red hair and the freckles, he was sure it was all clear. He could hear it in her voice, crystal clear, and his was so muddy muddy. Like the water in front of him. Puff. Puff.

Paterson spent most of his days in the library, searching public records and documents looking for something, but he didn't know what. He just knew that somewhere in between bills of sale and senseless bits of information was a reminder of who he was. There had to be at least some registration of his existence or an article that explained where he came from. It was unbearable to think he belonged to all this; the dusty stacks of books, the wide open streets, Albert or his grandfather sneering over a dead rodent. Or him feeling like his grandfather, standing over that emptied woman, her children crying. Even worse could all this belong to him, a prince set to inherit a kingdom of shame and death? Maybe there would be an eyewitness account of an unidentified spacecraft abandoning a baby with only a note that said "treat him as your own." This would at least be a relief, but that relief never came. Only more dirt came, thrown over his grave, burying him deeper, so deep he forget even himself.

All the pond-lake reflected now was a black starless sky and the city lights that surrounded it. There was the illusion of reality broken by silvery snakes of wind or undercurrents. Paterson exhaled the smoke and it lingered with the fog awhile, caught a draft and floated out across the water like an apparition. There certainly wasn't anything living below the surface of the pond-lake, he thought. No water moccasins or snapping turtles. Little gray frogs never even came near the edge. This was a dead lake. People rowed their boats across it but never swam in it. Ducks skimmed the surface but only as a place of rest, never a place to feed. No one even knew the lake had a name. The pond-lake used to be named after a long dead Native American chief who used to rule over this land in older times. It once was called Lake Arawaks. This name meant truth in life is truth in the Great Spirit. Paterson read this in the library. He had found it between history and pre-history, but it meant nothing to him.

Paterson knew what to call the pond-lake now. Puff. Puff.

It was the Elmer D. Sparks Memorial Pond-lake.

He began to think about green beans and his grandmother singing "Amazing Grace" at bed time. And he thought about the gnats that fly into your nose and into your eyes and ears. It was the heat, his grandmother said; they're attracted by the heat. He thought about being wrapped up in silk and put to sleep, having everything inside of him being sucked out with

nothing left behind but his cocoon. It would be better that way. At least then he would be helping something out and that something could put his guts to use. After all, he wasn't using them. Paterson thought about red hair and freckles and the first time he'd seen her, underneath a bridge. He was far from being a ghost then.

He was in flux with the world, a part of nature; a hungry looming bright green nature. Paterson was thinking about that nature and it intoxicated him. It mixed, swirling with the dope and the booze, like water and city lights and starless skies, and for the first time that day he felt almost content. His eyelids weighed themselves down, and he fell asleep right there between the Elmer D. Sparks Memorial Pond-lake and the bar that belongs to Johnny.

Or was it Rick.

Paterson knew another woman, intimately, who lived above the theater. The night he met her, he was coming out of a movie. It was the one where Humphrey Bogart lost all his gin to the river. When he stepped outside, the woman was standing below the marquis. The red lights of the movie titles made her skin look flawless. She saw him and invited him up; up to where she lived above the theater. That night she told Paterson that she was waiting for him but he had never seen her before and he was sure she was waiting for any body. For any body with money. He had had the money and he was a body. There was a strange tenderness in being with her. He loved her like being drunk. It was a temporary release but every time he left her, he felt even worse. Even emptier. Once, she told him she loved him, said she would give up sleeping around, just for him. Paterson didn't believe that. Besides, he didn't want her to love him or give up sleeping around on his account. That woman, the whore above the theater, was the last person he wanted to hear those words from, because he knew how incapable of love she was. And deep down inside he believed he could do better.

There was one night when Paterson was visiting the woman, she was asleep and he was watching her. Not in a fond way, but more in a contemplative, sober way. Why am I here? He chuckled slightly to himself. Many books he had read were written by people who asked the very same question. Were they lying in bed with a whore when they posed that question? He chuckled slightly again. He began to really look at her, taking the time to study her feature. Her homely features. That first night, after Paterson had gotten her out from under the red light of movie titles and up to the white light of her living room, he saw how scarred and wrinkled her face really was. He didn't mind then. He had brought a whole half-pint of his favorite whiskey into the theater with him. He was celebrating being laid off, and when he'd met her he wasn't all together. But he told himself, long ago, that even if he wasn't drunk, he still would have gone to bed with her. Now, looking at her, with the red light and the pedestrian murmurs, the headlight shadows filtering and drifting past the linen curtained bedroom window, completely sober and satisfied, all Paterson wanted to do was go home. The woman must have felt him inspecting her because she shifted, rolled over and yawned, and started talking to him. This was the last thing Paterson wanted, to talk to her. He always said stupid things when he talked to her.

She asked him what he was thinking. He told her that he was thinking of marrying her. That was a stupid thing. The woman smiled with her horse's mouth and wet eyes.

Really? Yes.



Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

Once, the woman with the scarred and wrinkled face told Paterson her life story, because he had asked her to. This was another stupid thing. She told him she was from a small place called Dogtown. He was sure she meant somewhere else but he didn't say anything.

My father owned a Rolls Royce and he used to beat my mom.

Paterson acted as if he cared but all he was thinking about was the Rolls Royce.

My mother tried to commit suicide. My father did commit suicide.

He acted as if he cared and asked if her father had ever beaten on her. She didn't answer. He asked her if she ever thought about suicide herself.

Of course. Everyone does.

This was the truest thing he had ever heard from her. But Paterson didn't care, all he was thinking about was committing suicide.

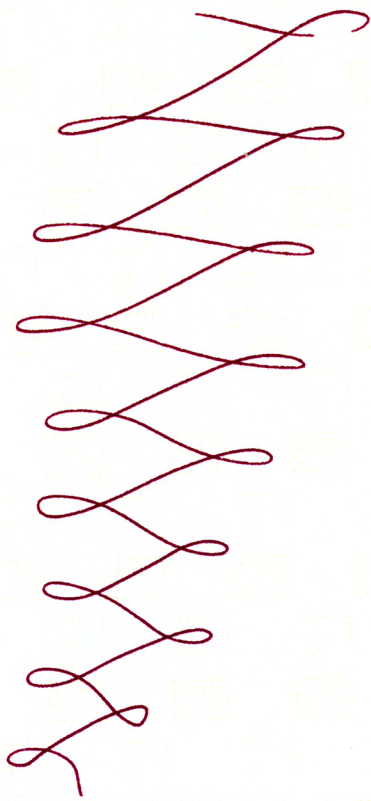
He woke up to the dark blue to purple to pink sky with jagged cut outs of pine trees and to the shine of an officer's flashlight and the prod of his nightstick. Hey buddy, these parks have posted hours, is what the officer said to Paterson. Half asleep and hung over he apologized. No problem is what the officer said. He also said this:

It happens to the best of us.

This is what Paterson said to the officer:

Excuse me?

The officer wished him good luck and let him off with a warning, and strolled away, awash in the dark blue, purple, pink and now orange glow of a seven o' clock morning, humming "Amazing Grace."





# MICHAEL MAHAFFEY

UNTITLED

ink and photo-transfer on water color paper





# JENNY ADKINS

## ON TRYING TO WRITE

Hidden, snug  
 Behind thick vines of marijuana smoke,  
 The roots cradling my body in such  
 comfortable fashion  
 to watch the wisps tangle in the leaf canopy  
 as I reflected on Caravaggio's  
 absence of light;

I was not an outcast,  
 Not by self or society.

I saw the line between the world and  
 what it could be; the thin wall of smoke between  
 me and what we all were, for instance

I once was dirt then an ape or maybe, I just was,  
 Then I became me,  
 Which I am not happy with at all;  
 I kissed a girl, once  
 who told me I wasn't her style,  
 Truthfully  
 I have no style

And it was unkind of her to notice, so I turned back  
 into an ape and became Abraham  
 And this time sacrificed my son, not because  
 God didn't try to stop me, but simply  
 Because I didn't know how to explain it.





# SHARON FARRELLY

CHAOS TO ORDER

wood, plexiglass, and pharmacy stock bottles

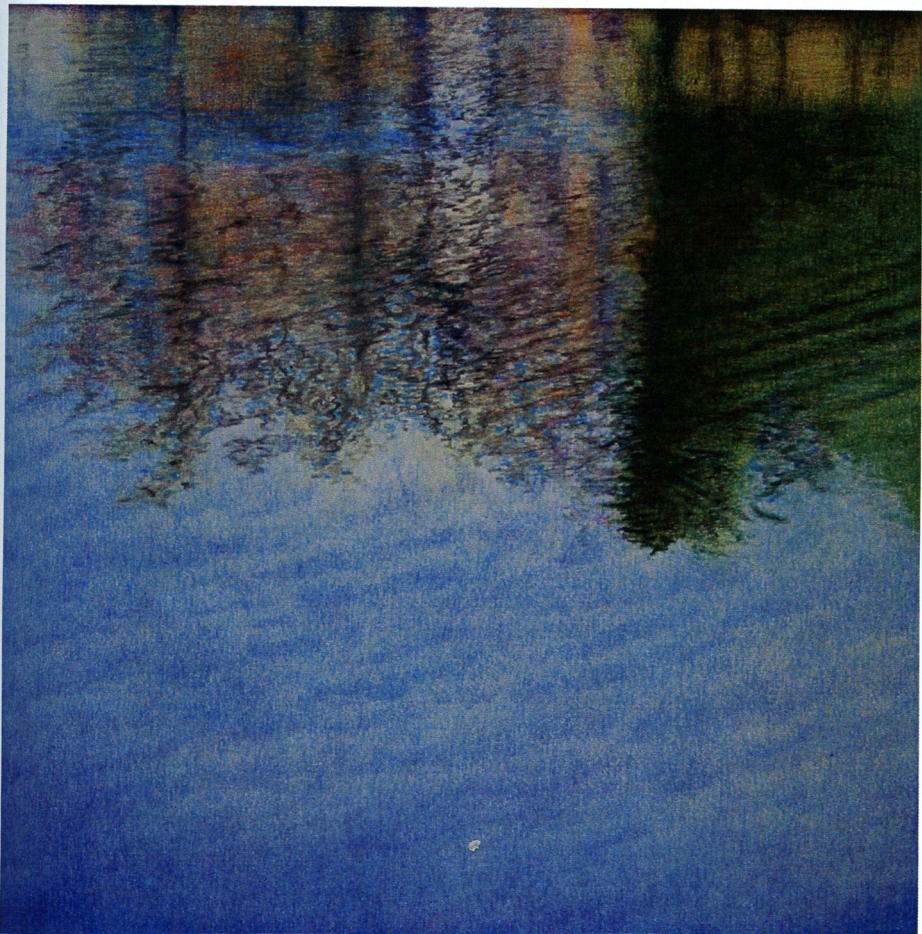




# ROXANE GARRETT

POINT CIRCLE

colored pencil on paper





# CHRIS NIKITAS

JULY 25, 2006

The stone hit the tile floor like an echo, an afterthought, upstaged by the tinkling glass, the gasping hole it had left in the window, the chaos strewn across the courthouse lobby. People threw their hands up, some hit the ground, some screamed, some fled outside. Any action in DC is terrifying. A window shatters and people automatically think "terrorism." No one trusts one another here. The whole city is on edge, tensed like a mouse trap, snapping at the first sign of danger or fear. The courthouse security guards had raced outside and piled themselves atop the stone's accomplice, a stringy, patchy man who, not resisting, was thrown to the concrete and cuffed, then brought inside and charged with throwing the stone. Lacking bail money, he was brought to a cell and fell asleep.

The lobby was a beehive of movement that morning. It always was. People in suits dashed past the accused in their t-shirts. Pages, runners, lawyers, criminals, clerks, relatives, all swirling in a great pool of mankind's best successes and worst failures. Tyrone Jefferson was dashed out of Courtroom 119 by his court-appointed lawyer, Dennis Seymour.

"Mr. Seymour---" Seymour was in a flurry, stuffing a manila file folder into his open briefcase and pulling another one out, zipping down the hall, his eyes on another case, another client. "Mr. Seymour---"

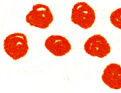
"You're welcome," said Mr. Seymour, hardly listening. His thick, boxy frame jostled past marshals, clients and lawyers, most of whom he smiled and waved to. The case had been a success, Mr. Jefferson found innocent of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, and now Mr. Seymour was off to the third floor for a preliminary hearing in a carjacking case. As the duo approached the crowd in the lobby, Mr. Seymour said hurriedly over his shoulder, "Listen, now I don't want you getting in any more trouble. I like seeing you, but I'm tired of defending you! Alright?"

"Mr. Seymour, listen to me, I---"

"Great! I need to go! Take care!" And with a sweep of wool coat, Mr. Seymour had vanished into the swirling mass.

"I don't got no place to go." Jefferson stood in the crowded lobby feeling very much alone. Everyone here, bustling from courtroom to courtroom: they all had a destination, they all knew where they were going.

Jefferson hadn't known where he was going for two decades. When he was 11, his father



had been shot going down the wrong block in Anacostia. His mother had to work full-time to support her four children, of whom he was the third. Without her to impede him, Jefferson started hanging out with new crowds. By 13, he was drinking and smoking pot. 15 saw him trying cocaine and PCP and watching both his older brothers get sent to jail for carjacking. At 16, he dropped out of school and vanished into the DC undercurrent.

Jefferson had spent the past twenty years on the street all around the city. Begging during the day in a few different spots. Downtown, by Metro Center. Up by Union Station. Recently, he'd been favoring Chinatown. If he went too close to the Mall or Georgetown, the police would quickly shuffle him away. Most days, he'd hit the homeless shelter for a free meal, and then use the change he'd gathered for a cheap bottle of wine. He'd drink it in some alley where a cop wouldn't bother him and spend the rest of the day drunk. Once winter arrived, he'd have to find a way to a homeless shelter, but now it was summer; it was warm enough to just pass out in a park.

It was Tuesday. I hated Tuesdays. Hated them. It's too early in the week to be over the weekend, but too late to complain about being back at work. Fridays and Saturdays, I would party, Sunday for rest and recovery, then charge back into the grind on Monday to my waiting internship. But by Tuesday morning, the lawyer I was working for had crushed my spirit soundly, and I found myself already pining for the distant weekend.

As I stepped off the subway train, my cell phone rang. Fumbling with my briefcase, I pulled it out of my suit pocket. It was my boss. "Good morning, Kevin," I said with all the energy and good-nature I could muster.

Kevin snapped back accusingly, "Chris, where's the Peterson file? I can't find it. Did you leave it on your desk?" Apparently, he couldn't wait until 9:00 to yell at me; he had to start at 8:55.

Defensively I replied, "No, you told me a while ago to stop leaving files on my desk. I put it on your desk before I left yesterday."

"Well, where is it?" Still, the accusatory tone.

"Your desk. On top of your computer."

"Well, I can't find it. He's in trial in ten minutes and I can't find it. Where are you?"

"At the Metro stop. I'll be at the office in a couple minutes."

"The office? I told you to meet me at court this morning!"

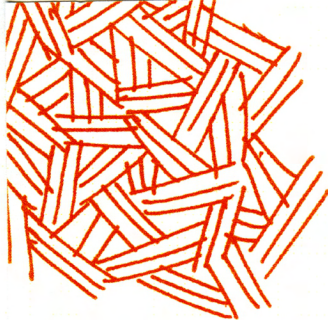
Placid, I sighed, "No, you said the office."

"I know I said court. Were you even listening?" Arguing with a lawyer truly is pointless.

"Of course. What courtroom?"

Pause. "Courtroom 211. Just get down here," he sighed, "Christ." And he hung up. I know he said office, I remember it yesterday. "Where should I meet you tomorrow?" "The office, but get there quick, we have to be in court in the morning." So, I emerged from the subway station. It would take about as long to walk the six blocks to court as wait for





another train, so I started hiking. Even this early, the heat cooked the city, evaporating the sweat from the pedestrians and hanging it low in the atmosphere, forcing me to breathe it in. It took me about fifteen minutes, but I got to the district courthouse and walked inside, past the metal detector, gliding past the accused, the lawyers, the police officers, up the escalator and down the hall to 211, where Kevin stood outside the door.

"Chris, I found the file. It was in my briefcase. You did put it on the computer. I just moved it." No apology, no 'good morning.' He quickly swept me inside, went up in front of the judge and began arguing Mr. Peterson's case.

This was essentially how summer had gone. I had fled Chattanooga in May, arriving in Washington in June. I knew the summer was the time to try a fresh start. I could go off on an adventure, discover who I was, gain some confidence and come back to Chattanooga with a newfound respect for myself. Without any internship, I went to Washington and upon my arrival found one with a criminal defense attorney. For a short time, it passed smoothly.

But one week, everything changed. I was abused, yelled at frequently, publicly, and for things that were hardly my fault. For example, when Verizon failed to send subpoenaed phone records to the office until a few days before the case, I was somehow the one at fault, despite calling them several times every day and urging them to expedite the requested materials. Things that were out of my control were somehow my fault. Even the assignments I accomplished received minimal praise. Kevin would insist I go home at 5:00, despite a couple incomplete projects. I would inform him of these projects, but Kevin simply insisted I leave. The next morning, I would receive a sound thrashing for having left them undone, even though he had given me his blessing just 16 hours earlier.

Here I was now, the youngest intern in my apartment building, poured awkwardly into a fresh suit. It was late July. I had suffered through a painful month and a half here. I had arrived seeking self-respect, confidence, pride, growth, maturity. Instead, it had sapped what little of me there had been, leaving a timid, self-loathing, shrinking human being not sure of where to go next or what to do, just certain that most decisions he was making were incorrect. I was treading water in a life path I knew I had no future in.

Jefferson squinted at the spiteful sunlight of the exterior of the courthouse. He had wandered out in a daze. The sun beat down, heating up the boiling vapor in the atmosphere, igniting the air around him. It had to be at least 95 outside, and this wasn't even the hottest part of the day.

Where was he supposed to go? What was he supposed to do? Back to begging for enough money to get wine and passing out in an alley? He was tired of it. After twenty years of this shit, jail almost sounded like a release.

Jefferson couldn't face the sun. He had to turn his head down to the earth which had spat him out. And then he saw the stone.

Peterson pled to two months probation. Not a bad deal, truth be told. I'd met him twice; he'd met with Kevin at his Chinatown office both times. Each time, Kevin was forced to take a phone call and excuse himself from the room for a few minutes. In this interval, Pe-

terson would inevitably turn to me and simply say "It looks bad, don't it." I was asked this question regularly, so I had a programmed response.

"We're going to try our hardest, Mr. Peterson." To the first client who'd asked me, Mr. Barnes, I had said, "Don't worry, we have clients in it much deeper than you." And it had been true. Barnes was only on trial for a misdemeanor possession of marijuana charge. I'd seen much worse: rapes, murders, carjacking. But according to Kevin, what I had told Mr. Barnes was not the right thing to say and I received a harsh rebuking for saying it.

"We can't divulge that kind of information," Kevin snapped at me later, "What if he then decides to go to trial and is found guilty? He can complain and I could get disbarred! You have to think before you say things like that, Chris!" I couldn't really help it; at the time I didn't know how to answer that question. Especially when I started, the number of rapes and murders was terrifying, and here I was facing down the murderers and rapists on a daily basis, but what I learned after a short while was that the accused are mostly ordinary people, too. Most of them are just facing unfortunate circumstances.

"Chris," Kevin demanded as we rushed to the hall, "Did you get the Pre-Sentence Report in the Glover case?"

"No, you told me to run up here to meet you. I haven't had a chance to get it yet."

"What?" Kevin snapped, "What's wrong with you? Go get it right now!"

"Alright, sorry," I replied. "Judge...Bailey?"

"Boasberg!" he cried furiously, "Aren't you writing these things down? Hurry up! I'll be in courtroom 315." With Kevin unable to bring himself to look at me and my utter incompetence, I quickly calculated how I would get it. I had to go to get Boasberg's chamber number at information downstairs and call him to get permission to go back to his chambers, and then pick it up. Kevin and I parted at the escalator. He went upstairs, I went down. With his nagging absent in my ears, the only sounds dominating the scene were the drone of activity in the lobby and my own thoughts.

It was a stone much like any other: roughly the size of a billiard ball and sitting in one of the gardens adjacent to the H. Carl Moultrie District Courthouse. It looked to be granite, dominantly feldspar, with flecks of mica making it glitter lightly in the mid-morning sun. It was this eerie glitter that Jefferson found so appealing.

This life on the streets had taken its toll on him, driven down his morale. If jail would put a roof over his head, then so be it. Gazing at that stone, Jefferson formulated an idea.

"Hey, son can I help you?"

"Yeah, I'm trying to pick up a Pre-Sentence Report from Judge Boasberg?" It was a question, not a statement. "Can you give me the phone number for his chambers?"

"Of course," she thumbed through some papers.

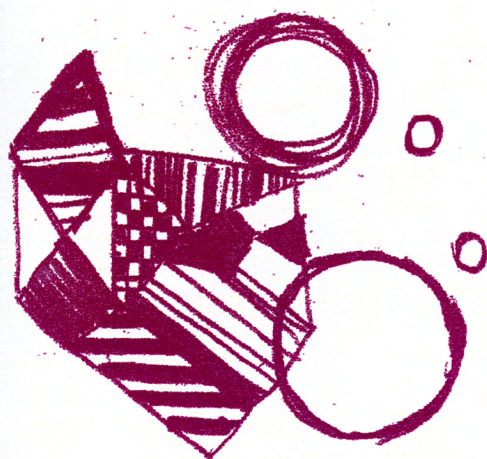
An explosion of shattering glass shocked my ears. In slow motion, I thrust my left arm up to defend me from whatever was happening and dodged to my right. Terrorists. Screams



echoed across the lobby. I slowly dropped my arm, looking at what had happened. I couldn't see much. People were running every direction imaginable. I heard gruff voices belting out "Get on the ground! On the ground!"

A crowd of people stood about thirty feet back from the officers. As I approached, I saw shattered glass, felt the rush of hot air from outside. Three officers whom I had passed on the way in were violently subduing a silent black man. He was patchy, unshaven, and looked weak, dirty. His clothes hung lopsided on him. His hands looked worn as the police viciously slapped cuffs on him. They forced him up and slowly led him away right past me.

The rest of the day passed with minimal incident. Kevin was anything but thankful when I brought the Pre-Sentence Report from Judge Boasberg. "Chris, I don't have time for this now. His hearing is in five minutes. What took so long?" When I told him about the courthouse window and the man who smashed it in, he didn't care.





# NICK TURNER

FACULTY CONCERT SERIES POSTER,  
POSCARD, JEWEL CASE, AND CD  
digital output

# faculty concert series

cadek department of music

The Music of: Marin Marais and Sainte-Colombe  
As Performed by: Spectre de la Rose  
David Miller, Therorbo and Baroque Guitar  
Timothy Roberts Harpsichord  
Elizabeth Liddle, Viola de Gamba  
Susanna Pell, Viola de Gamba  
Alison Crum, Viola de Gamba  
Marie Knight, Baroque Violin

Roland Hayes Concert Hall  
UTC Fine Arts Center  
January 8, 2007  
8:00 p.m.  
Free Admission





# PHILIP BURTON MORRIS

## FOLDING MODERN FLAGS

How near this was to nothing:  
The candle-dipped fingertips of lemon,  
Smokehouse and sap of campfires  
Doused by the stomping feet of rains.  
All of these are proof that asphalts  
Lick their lips at buried grass.  
All of these are fox paws, snared  
By wires of the telephone poles  
I have resketched as arms,  
Because I need these arms.

I hide these voices, voices  
Of the warm, tenting arms  
That hold pocketfuls of leaf  
And lemon—I hide them in trees.  
Flaws in glass are thought bubbles  
For the diamonds changed. I need  
This change. Because the field  
Hears your whispers, builds  
City offices for the pasture grass  
Of your angrily handwritten letters.

I need to stop reading letters,  
Because we publish all these things  
On screens that hurt the sleep  
Inside my eyes. Towers yawn from age,  
Their doors creaking. Porch bones break  
From the marrows of rotting wood.  
Do steel buildings fear arthritis  
In the metals of their wrists?  
We are collapsed cardboard houses.  
We fold as staircases underfoot.

One day, you may stand on corner streets,  
Shouting to the town-house walls  
Buried inside all the glass and turret.  
You may testify the evidence  
Of birds' wire sanctuary sermons  
To businessmen. Businessmen  
Sometimes find flowers for their wives  
In the palmwrinkles of sidewalks.  
They do not deserve our blame.  
They do not dictate memos selling parks.

Their loves are feeders for their birds.  
Theirs are dreams of feet that walk  
Over marshes, not concrete. None of us  
Dreams of concrete, or the subway.  
We built this thing of glue and sticker-  
Stars. We remember grade-school desks  
That folded open for paper sheets  
And apple cores that slowly browned wet,  
Hiding from the corner eyes of sunlight.  
We will one day sleep in dirt's linens.



# TOM SHAW

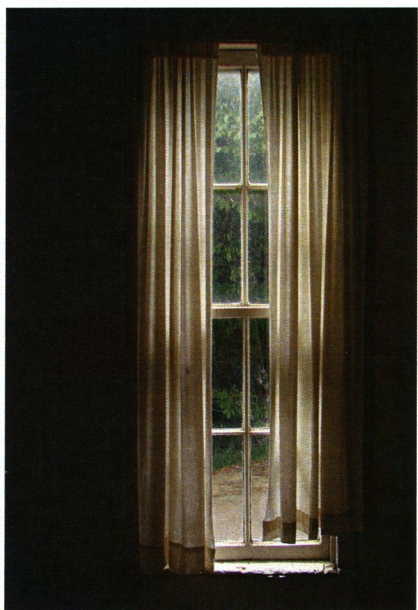
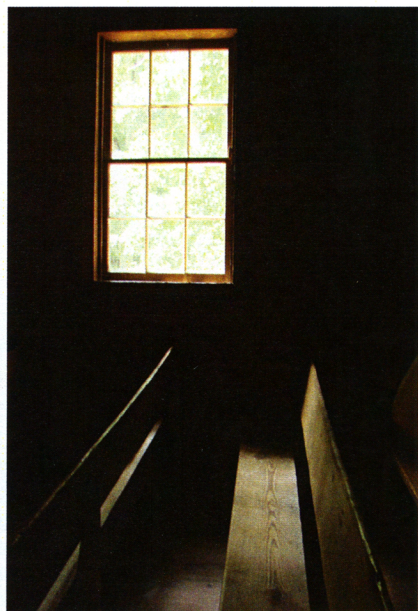
MCKINLEY VI  
graphite on bristol





# STEPHANIE TATE

DWELLING  
photographic prints





# KATIE CHRISTIE

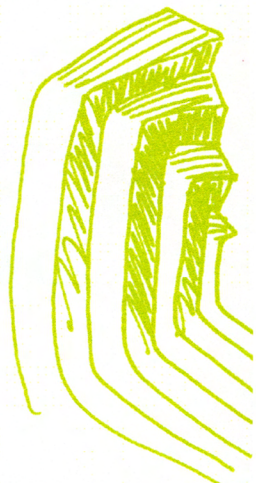
## STRUCK

Tonight is Halloween but I wish it was Christmas. Not for presents or Santa or Jesus but for the tree. The dark piece of beautiful, asymmetrical nature bolstered upright against the planes and right angles of my world. In my world, beauty is symmetry, but I once kissed a boy whose left eye was higher than his right. On my way to the hospital today I passed a man who has only one and a quarter arms. I saw him through my window at the corner of two streets while I waited for the light to change. He was wild-looking, disheveled and lean. Some indefinable voice told me without words that he was also dangerous but I don't know that. He did walk very quickly, bobbing his head to one side and letting his short, match-stick limb swing strangely high on that side. And the way his eyes looked, penetrating into a million objects, they made me wonder if he noticed the same things mine did. Or if maybe he saw another existence transcending this one which he felt he must keep an eye on as he wandered half in my world.

I don't know what color his hair was, or whether he was wearing a hat. I go back by that corner because I went to the river after my appointment. The parking lot was gravel, weathered railroad ties serving to separate the spaces, and my SUV dwarfed the row of rusted bicycles looking out over the river. It was brown, choked with stranded life, and because we are still in a drought it had pulled away from the thick bank, leaving it damp and swirled from the river's retreat. The mud on the sharply dropping banks was streaked with red like a Hoodoo man mixed blood into the gumbo. When I got out of the car, I could see a child's footprints pressed into the mud and a frayed rope swing in a tree. The trees here are old and young, growing up from a sparse carpet of full-bodied weeds and leaning out over the water as though they receive their nourishment from simply seeing it. How sad they don't have eyes. I walked until the signs of humans were replaced by thicker undergrowth whose pale green fingers clung to my nylon stockings. When I came to a place where the bank cut to the river a little less suddenly I went down to it. I walked to the end of the mud, my sensible office shoes just lapped by brown water. The bank sloped high around me; I felt dwarfed by the reaching trees and weeds but also covered, protected, enclosed. I stared into the water rushing slowly past me. There was a turtle resting on a rock or something, only his thin head above the surface, disappearing and popping up again. Tadpoles swarmed in a puddle near me. I also wanted to be alive in the water. I looked up and across the river from me there was a tree wider than it was tall. Old enough for climbing, its limbs were thick like pythons and the leaves on the left side spread like five-pointed stars at the extremities. Most of the right side was scattered on the ground because there was a black, jagged burn splitting the

trunk unevenly. Moss and fungi were breaking down the fallen limbs and those still hanging, swaying from short strips, were gray with a few skinny, desiccated black leaves.

I took off my suit, stacking it neatly on top of my shoes and ran into the water without looking back. It took my breath away. The days are warm, but the nights are cold, and the water had not recovered. I ducked under and swam, pulling my arms overhead and kicking my feet inelegantly. I am not a trained swimmer and when I surface for air it is always on the right. Today, though, as my body turned from side to side, I pulled harder on one side. I seemed to sink sideways, one side pulling me down, the other struggling to the surface. I wonder if the lump in only one breast makes me asymmetrical too.





# WINTER GIAMPORTONE

MATERIAL + CONCEPT + METHOD EXHIBITION POSTER

digital output



presenting

# MATERIAL + CONCEPT + METHOD

sculpture and design exhibition

thursday, december 6th 2007  
6pm - 9pm

Create Here Gallery  
55 E Main St  
Chattanooga, TN 37408

Space donated by:





# AVRIN L. ROSS

ACROSS AND BEYOND  
photographic print





# ALISON BURKE

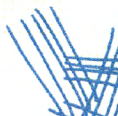
## IDIOSYNCRASY

laughter from the swung open door  
as a group of jangling ebullient girls  
wafts through,  
giggle past us without noticing

you seem distant somehow  
cordial, like a neighbor.  
following your gaze  
to the sticky mirror  
behind bleachers of liquor hierarchy,  
under the diva round bulb lights,  
we are framed.

you look away  
down to your own hands  
distorted in the freckled glass:  
the rhythmic fidget of  
a stubby middle fingernail pushing and picking  
heroically at its own thumb cuticle,  
one hand-heel tucked under a cheekbone  
pulling up the hollow's skin,  
twisting one side of your face into a puckered smile.  
and our eyes meet again:

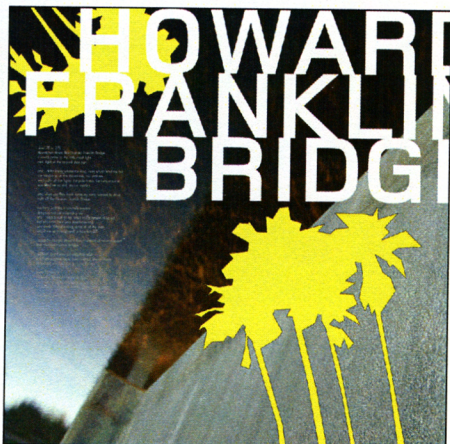
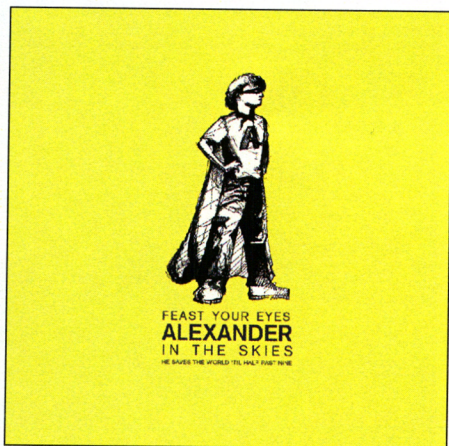
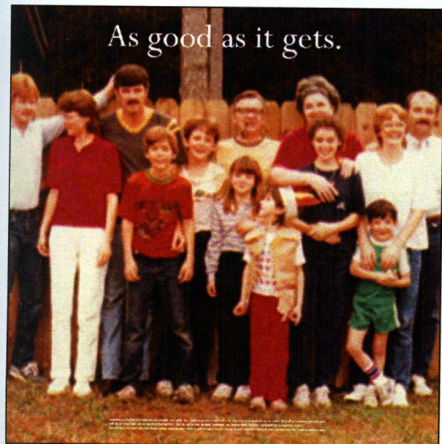
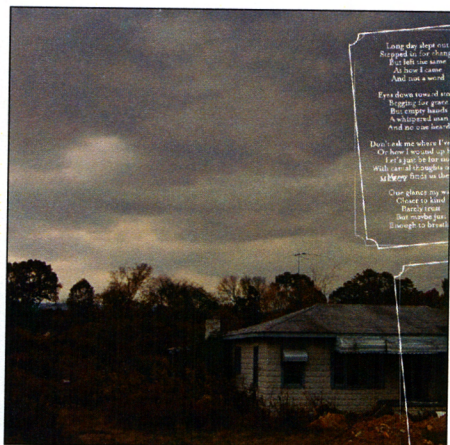
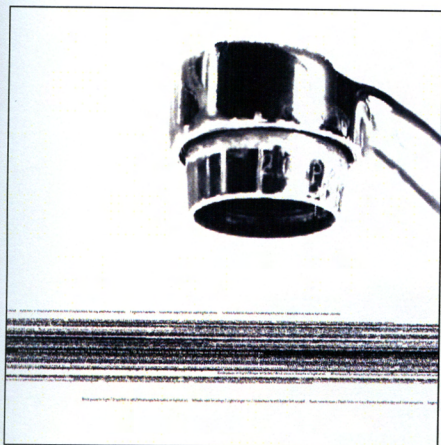
the pillar arm drops across your chest  
as you shift slightly on a red naugahyde stool,  
your hand slides to the edge of the counter  
then back to where it had been,  
this time halos a sweaty bourbon and water  
with the old warriored finger and thumb  
slowly, steadily spins the tumbler  
and with a poised periodic forefinger  
runs a cage of vertical lines  
through the fat drops of perspiration  
which puddle in a dark expanding ring around the glass  
softening the battered wooden countertop veneer  
as the words lurch out naked, awkward in the reckless air:  
"I'm sorry."





# DANIEL SKOLFIELD

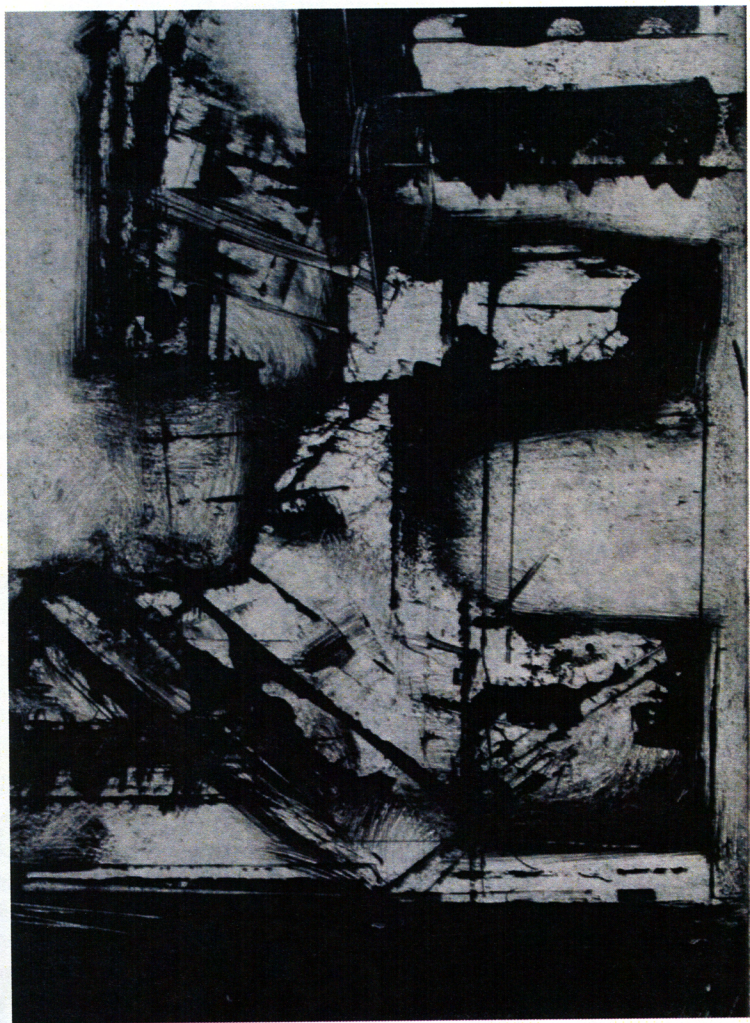
COY 2007 POSTER SERIES  
digital output





# JAKE KELLEY

TOTEMS OF MODERNITY  
solar etching





# NEAL PRIVETT

## A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE

"Read *Coriolanus* for next week," Dr. Robert Conway announced to his class. "And the article on reserve in the library. This will get us started on Shakespeare's Roman plays."

The last student out was a beautiful brunette. "'Goodnight, Dr. Conway."

Conway returned the smile. "G'night, Jane. Call me if you have any problems with *Coriolanus*." She waved and exited the room. Stage left. Out. Conway watched her go. Irish. Graduate student. Damn. Conway grabbed the stack of papers from the desk and shoved them into his briefcase. He did the same with *Twelfth Night*, a tattered, beaten down copy. Using his coffee mug as an appendage, the good doctor flicked off the light and walked down the quiet hall to his office.

He turned on the lamp, tossed his briefcase on the couch beside his desk and fell into his comfortable chair, vowing not to get up. His office was cool, dimly lit. With the lamplight bathing everything, it reminded him of his childhood bedroom just before he went to sleep and his father came in to read a story in the soft half-light of his room. It was the stories that stuck with him through the years, and more stories later. The act, the art of stories and words. The words were always there for him. And now he was a professor on the rise and a published author.

There was a knock at the door. He rose to answer it. It was Jane. She stood there, grinning sheepishly. "Sorry, Dr. Conway...what was the name of that article on reserve again?"

She had a wonderful accent. A lilt, actually. "*Shakespeare and the Politics of Coriolanus*." Her face was partially masked in the dim light of his office. He noticed the way the shadow caressed her cheekbone on the right side of her face. Ebony on ivory, he thought. Her green eyes glowed. Maybe she was a banshee in disguise.

Conway could only smile as she said goodnight. "Don't hesitate to call if you need anything." She was intelligent. Probably be chasing her PhD and writing books by next Fall.

"Later, Jane." She waved and closed the door behind her. The girl vanished from his office, down the hall, and into the night. He listened to her footsteps until they were completely gone. He sighed.

The telephone rang and shocked him from his reverie. The voice on the other end was elderly. He could tell that right away. The lady coughed, then spoke, "Um...is this Dr. Conway?"

"Yes. It is." Nothing. He repeated himself. "This is Dr. Conway. Can I help you?"

"I have a favor to ask you." Conway frowned. Whenever a stranger calls a professor out of the blue and asks for a favor it is never good. The words felt like razor blades sliding out of his mouth. "What...um...what can I do for you, ma'am?"

Silence. The voice on the other end was trying to find it's nerve. "I have a son..."

*Oh Lord. Here it comes,* he thought.

"I have a son, who writes, and he's been writing for years, and has never been published. I was wondering...I was wondering if you would have the time to possibly...*read* over one of his manuscripts and *edit* it, possibly even put it in the hands of a publisher if you think it's good enough..."

Conway rubbed his tired eyes. "Ma'am, I don't usually do that. You see...my schedule is so busy right now that..."

"Please, Dr. Conway. You see, my son is...disabled and this is his only chance in life. You come highly recommended..."

"Well...thanks, and I am sorry to hear about your son, but I...to tell you the truth, ma'am..."

"You can call me Agnes..Agnes Dowd."

"Ms. Dowd, I am terribly sorry to hear about your son's problems, but keep encouraging..."

"I have tried others, but they all turn me down, too. You're a writer...you know writing and you know publishers."

"Well, yes...but..."

"Please, Dr. Conway. All I'm asking is that you just take a look at the manuscript. If you don't think it's any good, then I'll come and get it and I won't trouble you again. I don't have much money, but I can pay you a little."

"It's not a question of money, Ms. Dowd. It's..."

"Good. A copy of the manuscript is in the mail to you, care of the English department. Good night, Dr. Conway. I look forward to hearing from you soon."

*She hung up. She hung up. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it.* He dropped the phone onto the receiver and leaned back in his chair. "Why? Why did she call *me*? Why did I answer the phone?" He looked around his office. The poster of W.B. Yeats glanced back at him. "I know," Conway said to the poster. "I know."

Two days later the package arrived. The lady had spent a small fortune on postage. It weighed 5 or 6 pounds. Did she think he was *retired*? How in God's name could he ever read this monstrosity? The bulk was tossed on his office couch and he strolled off to class. Everytime he returned to his office, he had to move the package out of his way; from the couch to the desk, from one side of the desk to the other, from the desk back to the couch, then to the shelf, then to the bookcase, then back to the desk again.

Jane was dropping by his office fairly often, with a created question, or just to say hi. The dating of teacher and student wasn't something he ever considered, but he didn't know how



the university would view it. Or if they would even care. He supposed he had better turn it off or go check the guidelines. Or maybe he was assuming too much. Maybe she just liked to talk.

"What's this?" She patted the brown paper covered manuscript on the corner of the desk.

Conway really didn't want to talk about it. "Oh...it's a manuscript."

"Yours?"

"Oh no...this lady called and asked me to read it. Her...her son wrote it."

"Well? Are you?"

"Not yet. No time."

"You should read it. Maybe it's the next Great American Novel."

He shook his head. "I doubt it."

Jane winked. "You know, Confederacy of Dunces was discovered the same way."

"Well yeah...that's true. I hadn't thought about that." Conway scratched his chin. I'll check it out."

Jane stretched her arms in the air and cheered. "Yeah! Keep me informed." She was a woman, but she still had that aura of girliness about her. He loved that, the feeling that felt like a thunderstorm coming when you're a kid and you are stuck inside with all day to draw and read and play. It was a feeling of endless possibility and excitement of being in a particular place and a particular time. That the day was more than just a day and the night was more than just the night, and it was a feeling that only another person could resurrect within you. You couldn't do it yourself.

She had a girlish smile, but a woman's eyes peering from behind thin spectacles. All over literature. She could hold her own in any discussion. Writes fantastic papers. En route to a doctorate. Working on her first novel, "piece by piece." She was something. Hell yes, he would look over the manuscript and thanks for the prodding. He would do it, if for no other reason than to talk to her about it. "I'll check it out," he repeated, "and I'll let you know."

"I'm the *first* to know, right?"

"Of course." Her being enthusiastic and excited about this actually made him a little excited about the big damned bulk, too. After she looked at her watch, waved, and left the office, Conway picked up the package. He felt the weight in his hands, turned it over a few times, then ripped off the brown wrapping.

The letters screamed silently. The letters had a deep bold voice. They said something, and what they said was *THIS IS A NOVEL*. By Conner Dowd.

Robert Conway shook his head in disbelief. *That* was the title? *This Is A Novel*. It sounded like a joke. He began to read.

*This is a novel, about everyone, and everything in the universe; the universe that I observe from afar. The reason that I stand apart from the entire universe is that I am different, and*

so is the man that I will tell you about---William Grey, who recently died. Before he passed away, he made copious notes on every continent. He wrote about every living creature, every idea, every thought ever conceived in every mind, every religion, every song, poem, and painting, every book, every war, every sexual act, every instance a human or animal interacted with another living thing, he wrote about it. And I have all of his notes...

Conway sat and stared at the page. *This is insanity*, he thought. He continued reading.

*Some people would call what I have done insanity. But I call it an act of the Divine. I suppose people have no faith in the power of the human mind. Despite all that, I present to you the story of William Grey, and how he captured the entire social and natural history of the universe, both on the planet and off.*

"Ok...that caps it. This guy's insane." Conway flipped through the pages. "A novel about everything. Great." He flipped to the end of the book. The pages were unnumbered, and there were no paragraphs. The book just rolled on and on for well over a thousand pages with no break at all. And there was no contact information in the packet. Ms. Dowd would contact him undoubtedly. A week later she did.

"Hello, Ms. Dowd." He tried to sound upbeat. "Yes, I am still reading. Very...uh...very interesting novel."

"Do you think so? Conner won't let me read it. He demanded I find an editor and a publisher. That's all. What's it about?"

"Um...everything," Robert mused. "It's about everything."

"Everything?"

"So far. Yes, Ma'am. It's going to take a lot of editing, Ms. Dowd...and to be quite honest, I don't think..."

"Well, keep with it. I'll call you back." Her voice vanished into the click and dial tone.

"Damn it! She hung up *again!*" He buried his face in his hands. "You are too nice, Doc," he told himself. "You are too nice."

That evening, he brought the manuscript to the coffeeshop down the street. Somehow Jane was there and somehow they had agreed to accidentally somehow run into one another and somehow, there they were, having coffee and you're a damned fool, Robert Conway, and there they were looking over the mysterious opus of the known universe.

"Is he trying to define reality?"

Robert frowned. "Don't get all philosophical on me, Jane. This is *serious*."

"Well philosophy was my minor when I was an undergraduate."

"How can I get out of this?"

"You can't. You have to do it." She grinned mischievously while she sipped her coffee.

"I don't *want* to do this."





"Give it more time, Doc. At least it's not boring."

She had a point there. They clinked coffee cups and toasted the unknown writer.

As it turned out, chapter 2 started to pick up steam. Chapter 3 gained more steam. Chapter 4 was all about ancient Babylon and the evolution and extinction of camels in North America before Columbus. Conway couldn't believe it. Somehow the guy was making it work. How could he make such an idea work?

"Jane---this guy's a genius!" Conway flagged her down in the hall. "I can't believe I'm saying this. You've got to read some of this. Read this page about the colonizing of Africa." She took the page from his hand. A smile broke across her face like a beautiful sunrise. "This is good. Are you going to send it to a publisher?"

"I have to finish it first. I just wanted you to read that. This guy's got it, Jane! He's got IT! I haven't heard from the mother in 3 weeks, though. That's kinda strange."

"Well, you're a true saint to be reading her son's manuscript. What did you say was wrong with him?"

"I don't know. She just told me that he's sick and stays at home all of the time, never goes anywhere, and writes 12 hours a day."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Isn't that just mysterious?"

"Definitely. Listen to this, " she began to read.

*The man could not bear the agony of seeing his culture die. He hanged himself on a tree limb and with him died what remained of his tribe's hope.*

Back in the office, Conway inserted the page back where it belonged, taking care not to disorder it. "You know, Jane, I really appreciate your input. It's valuable." He poured coffee from the pot he always kept going in the corner.

"Always glad to help out a professor in need."

"You know, an English company is doing *Canterbury Tales* at the Theatre Center...we should go."

Jane looked at him for a second that was much too long for Conway's comfort. "Are you asking me out?"

Conway felt like he was going straight to hell. "Yes."

"How old are you, Doc?"

Here it comes, he thought. "I'm 35. How old are you?"

"I think that you are supposed to take half the other person's age and add seven years, right?"

"Come on...Come on...how old are you?"

"I am 24, almost 25. So I think we are logistically ok. And yes, I would love to go. Even though I hate the *Canterbury Tales*."

After the last class of the day, Robert stopped by the office and saw the message light on his phone blinking. "Dr. Conway, this is Ms. Dowd. Please call me when you get this message. I really need to speak to you."

He dialed the number. She answered and the second ring. Robert could tell that she had been crying. "Dr. Conway, I truly appreciate you getting back with me so soon." Her voice was choked and clogged with pain.

"What can I do for you, Ms. Dowd?"

He could tell she was steadying herself. "This morning, my only son died."

Robert's heart jumped. "Died? He died? How?"

"Well, Dr. Conway, my son Conner was in a terrible accident years ago and has not been well since."

"I am...very sorry to hear, Ms. Dowd..."

She went on as if she did not hear him. "He has not been well ever since...you see, he was horribly disfigured in the accident and has spent the past 15 years or so as a recluse, wearing a mask, keeping to himself. He never left his section of the house."

"What happened?"

"He took pills to rest, you see, to settle down. He was plagued with insomnia and nightmares. This morning he took...an overdose..."

"God...I'm sorry, Ms. Dowd...really..."

"My only baby is gone."

Robert began to feel the sting of fresh tears in his eyes.

"You have his last writings in your possession, Dr. Conway. It is the sum total of many years of labor. It is his life's work and I pray you can get it published."

"I'll finish reading it and will do anything I can. I have to say, Ms. Dowd, your son's novel is good...it's good. I don't know if I can find a publisher, but I will try."

"I will, of course, pay you an agent's fee that we can agree on."

"That's not an issue, Ms. Dowd. I will do my best, and thank you for entrusting me with the book. That means a lot."

"I will call again. Goodnight, Dr. Conway."

"Goodnight, Ms. Dowd...and I am so sorry for your loss. Your son was a great writer."

"He was beautiful, Dr. Conway. Even after the accident."

That night, Conway did not rest. He awoke several times, and each time he closed his eyes, he envisioned a lone man with a cloth mask, burning black eyes staring through the eye slits.



The figure stumbled around all night long, alone, in a Frankensteinian frenzy, the moon through the window, and the words, his only companions.

The face was a question mark. Robert tried to push it out of his mind. The face that he could not fathom haunted his dreams and his waking thoughts. The face that was rubbed away; the face that defined a body, giving it a permanent, unidentifiable cloak. And all those words, on unnumbered pages, all that was left of the voice Robert would never hear, except through the pages and pages of words.

The final chapter was about him, a faceless man, shamed by society, and cared for and hidden away by one person in the world, the only one who could still care about him, his mother.

The final words of Conner Dowd were:

*Words fall into my room like rain tonight. The words of the world, falling through me. The story of William Grey ends here, but the story of the universe he felt goes on, and on, and on, and on...*

Conway picked up the telephone and called the mother. He told her that the novel was amazing and that he was calling his own publisher that same day. "Keep your fingers crossed," he told her.

"I am so pleased. So pleased," Ms. Dowd said. Her voice sounded better than he had ever heard it.

That evening, he sat with Jane in the coffeeshop. She thumbed through the manuscript and read the ending at Robert's insistence. "I have to read the entire thing," she declared. "When can I?"

"Let me take care of the business end first, then you can take it home with you. I swear, Jane...this one will be huge!"

Jane read the part where the faceless man lumbers through his town, escaping into the night from the care of his mother. The townspeople chase him and eventually ostracize the mother for saving her son's life and keeping him in their midst, faceless and hidden away. "This sounds just like Stephen Crane."

Robert looked up. "Which?"

"Crane. *The Monster*. It's about a black man that is disfigured while saving the town doctor's son from a burning house. The doctor saves the man's life and hides him away. He escapes and the town ostracizes the doctor."

"That's funny," Robert said. "Let me see that." He studied the page. "I haven't read much Crane. Are you serious?"

"Yes. We're reading a book of his stories in American Naturalist Literature. That sounds exactly like Crane's story, only the mother character is substituted for the doctor. Maybe it's just a coincidence."

"Maybe."

That night, Robert sat at home, pulling book after book from the shelves. He took each major part of the man's novel and compared the sections to whatever work sounded familiar. By dawn, he held his head in his hands. The whale hunting episode in the manuscript, though the locale was changed, came straight out of *Moby Dick*. The orphan episode, out of *Oliver Twist*. The war episode in the Pacific during WWII...straight out of Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*. The part where the boys steal a car and drive to Memphis...out of *The Reivers* by Faulkner. And Robert wasn't positive, but all the psychological and philosophical issues in the middle chapters sounded a lot like Nietzsche.

Conner Dowd sat in his lonely room for 12 hours a day for years, merely copying scenes from hundreds of novels and pasted it all together like a sick scrapbook and tried to make it into something he called a novel that could be passed off as his own.

How could Robert tell his mother? He had spent weeks, months, reading a fabrication, an illusion. A lie.

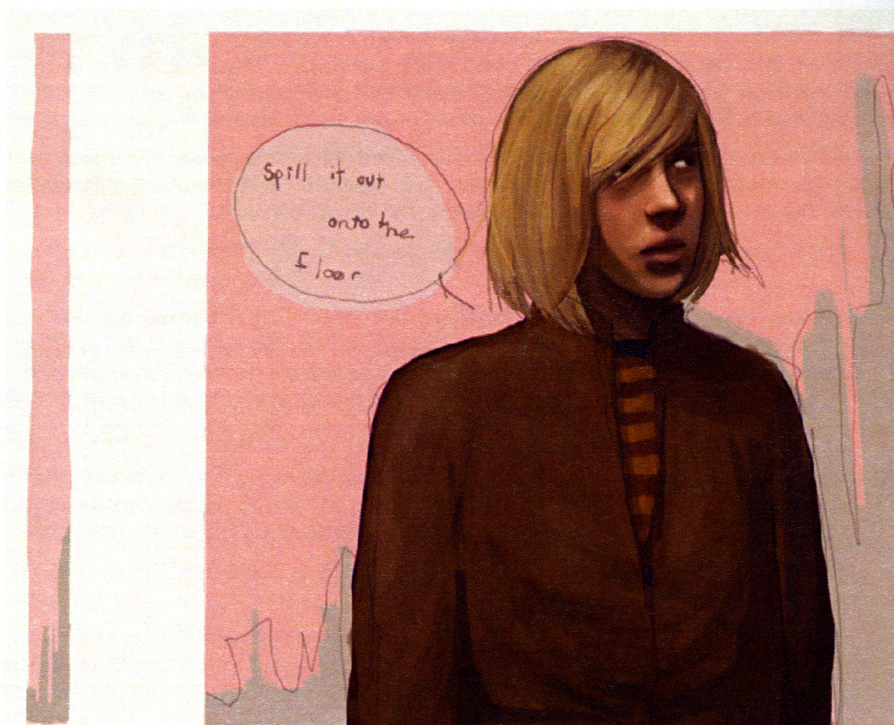
The call to Ms. Dowd was the hardest call he ever made, besides the one where he called his wife years ago and told her he was divorcing her. But this was infinitely more brutal. He was killing the last vestige of a dream the man's mother had created and held dear, that her dead son was a great writer, that his words, and his life's work, meant *something*. She answered the phone and Robert told her. He could barely hear his own voice. The only thing she said was, "I see. Thank you." Then she hung up. Then she was gone, to patch up whatever reality she could muster. Robert had not expected more. The messenger is never forgiven.

He told Jane the news. Then he placed the manuscript in the bottom drawer of his desk, and though he often thought about the man, his novel, and his heartbroken mother, he kept it in there. The novel was hidden away. Just like the man behind the words.



# TARA HARRIS

CASSEROLE  
ANYONE THERE  
DRAWING ON WALLS  
digital illustration







# MATT ZINGG

## JESUS CHRIST, IT WAS THE BIGGEST COCKROACH I'D EVER SEEN

Here, let me tell you my story. I was born too many years ago to swinging parents in the wettest dessert you can imagine. As a child I ate rocks and shat pebbles back out, pitching them in graceful arcs at unsuspecting lions. And sometimes I'd hit a Christian.

My virginity was taken by the fifty foot woman and a suicidal mallrat. I'd like to forget it but I was torn to pieces by a wild boar. My body parts were made into corporate art so I can't help but to remember.

I had a son once. I birthed him in a cave high up in the mountains. He was made out of mud and carpenter nails, could barely walk, and had clear blue eyes. I took my son to the cliffs and showed him the sky. I showed him the valley and he trusted me too much. That is when I pushed him off the mountain side.

I sold my daughter to Australian drug lords as a dingo hunter. Now she eats grown men.

Before my mother was alive I was married to a black and white girl who was forever by the lakeshore. She was always thirsty and drank and drank until she filled up like a balloon. When my wife burst she was so large that it rained for years and years.

I took God to court after that, when my house was scrapped to help built some silly boat. I sued for loss of property but I dropped the charges when I found out God Almighty was only a poor college student.

And in my old age I figured that my life was little more than written word and that I could never lie because nothing I said was true, so I spent my last days entertaining children with fairy tales. I made handsome alligators appear on the wall and with only my bare hands. For every child that was lonely, I built him a friend who would always say the right things and be on time. I saved the world from never existing.





# LISA LANG

GARMENT

muslin fabric, paper, and twine

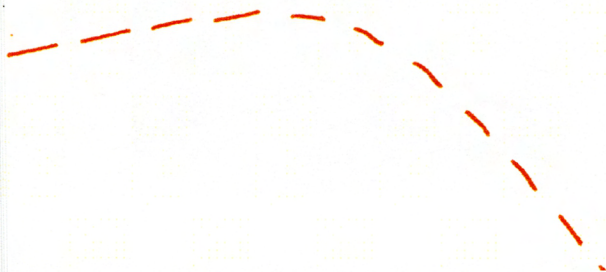






# MELINDA TAYLOR

SENIOR EXHIBITION POSTER  
photographic prints/digital output





## utc art department '08 senior exhibition

show 2 · april 15-25 · opening reception tuesday, april 15th 5:30-7pm

cross gallery of art, fine arts center, university of tennessee at chattanooga



# MATT HAINES

## RED

A hand that grips the uprooted poppies:  
wild as the day they split from seed,  
each finger is a candid red at the tip.  
The sun is the bearer of time

and it is setting as we stare,  
and the desert is damp with red.  
Our eyes are painted with  
the forbidden.

The leaves are stained a pulsating red.  
Your kiss is a well of gravity  
and all light slips deftly  
into your chest when the moon breaks.

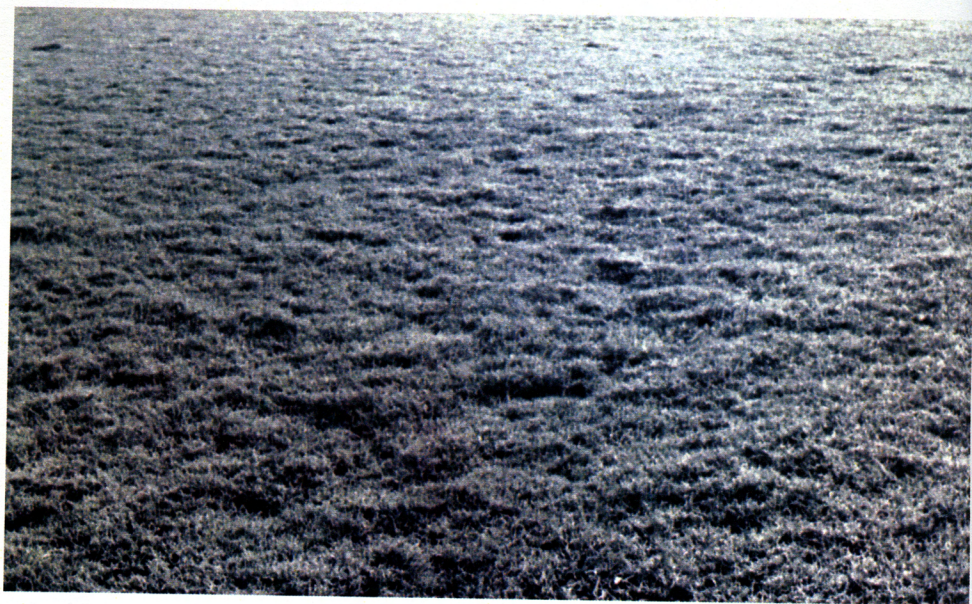
A mile from dawn, and we are weary.  
An unseen red is splashed into the clouds.  
Here, sunlight reminds us  
to force apart our bodies.





# T.J. BOWMAN

UNTITLED  
photographic prints







# EMILIA PHILIPS

## LONG DISTANCE

"I do the marshy ideas upon which life is built."

— Lorrie Moore in *People Like That Are The Only People Here*

As Levanda walked to the parking garage on Peachtree Street, she calculated the time she had been having an affair with Peter. Three months, two weeks, and one day. It seemed surreal, like a dream—if that wasn't cliché to believe—that at thirty-one, she had been sleeping with the first chair tenor sax player in her high school's symphonic band. Levanda had been second chair French horn and vice president of the poetry club (she would've been president but everyone was resentful of her talent). She wrote poems and songs and short stories into spiral bound notebooks—purple ones—and kept them in her bedside table like a stack of motel Bibles. When she moved to Atlanta, she brought her high school writing journals. Every morning over coffee, she read her poems and short stories, remembering the words of her senior English teacher, Mrs. Penchant. Brilliant, so advanced for a young woman of seventeen. You have a career ahead of you, Vandy. Keep up the good work.

Mrs. Penchant gathered writing contest fliers and scholarship applications for Levanda. She wrote glowing recommendation letters to Levanda's hopeful universities. University of Virginia. New York University. Cornell. A beautiful pen, a disciplined mind. Miss Morris is humble, though the quality of her work is smart and self-aware. The best student I've had in my twenty-three years.

Jesus, if she only she had someone like Mrs. Penchant now.

Almost five years ago, Levanda married a mechanic, Harry, and in a couple of months, she birthed a wad of pink skin who she named Devon. At four years old, the girl already did an impression of her mother's abrasive, scolding voice. I want you to keep your shirt tucked in at school. Mommy doesn't want you to look unkempt. But Levanda lived a safe, two hundred miles away from Harry and Devon and their white Craftsmen home in the north shore hills of the Tennessee River. For the past seven months, Levanda rented a small upstairs apartment in Grant Park across the street from the Atlanta Zoo.

Almost a year ago, Harry and a couple of the other mechanics from Advanced Auto Garage went out drinking. After a few too many Buds, they traipsed back to work where their cars were parked. Phil, a mechanic with the body of a middle school wrestler, talked Harry into riding the car lift to the top. After Harry climbed on and rode it all the way up, the other guys left him there, drunk and disoriented. Harry fell, breaking his tail bone and herniating two of his discs. Two surgeries and eight weeks of physical therapy later, he insisted that he couldn't go back to work.

"Can't lean over the engines or lift anything," he explained to his wife as he read the paper, one Sunday morning.

"You'll get better," she insisted. "And when you do, you'll get something else. A job somewhere else, at a desk or something. Right? I mean, we can't afford—"

"I can't sit at a desk all day. Are you crazy? I'll just have to stay out of work longer and hope I get better. Besides, you've still got a job."

"It's not enough, Harry, not with Devon in school."

"I didn't want her in that Catholic school anyway," he scoffed and turned the page. "It's not Catholic, Harry. It's Episcopalian. I went there."

"Well I went to public school. She'll be fine."

"I don't want her in public school. I don't feel comfortable—"

"You'll just have to make some sacrifices then, Van. No more eating out or new clothes. I mean, I certainly can't pay for Dev to go to school on my disability check," he said, shaking his head. "I can't even work."

And so Harry didn't work anymore and Levanda made some sacrifices. She moved. Though comfortable at her job at the Chattanooga Times Free Press as a marketing rep, she applied with Burlett & Berlette Marketing Firm in Atlanta. She possessed little experience, but interviewed well in a low-cut, black blouse and tight, gray pants. Owen Burlett, a man known in the industry for taking risks on virgin minds, offered her a position as a senior marketing consultant.

You have a career ahead of you, Vandy. Keep up the good work.

That's what Mrs. Penchant said.

Levanda's first and second choice universities rejected her application. The third choice, a small liberal arts school in Kentucky, gave her a scholarship that covered half of her tuition. She enrolled in a creative writing course. She confidently turned in her first short story, knowing that her professor, Dr. Welp, would embarrass the rest of the awkward and talentless freshman in his praise for her work. She would make an A. She would pop into Dr. Welp's office just to talk. She would be president of the poetry club, if there was one, or she would start one, if there wasn't.

When she received the short story, a violent red ink mottled the page. Some of her wittiest phrases and reader-catching one liners were underlined. Her starry-blue eyes welled with puddles of salty water until one single tear slipped from the corner of her eye and down her cheek like a river carved land. She was mad as a buzzing hornet. She wanted Don to rescue her like a prince on a white horse, charging to her aid and calling for her hand, but he didn't. He just sat there, hoarding the TV remote and watching the ball game.

In the top margin on the first page, Dr. Welp scribbled her a little note. CLICHÉ!—watch what you say! Don't regurgitate! Every short story and poem she turned in afterward re-



ceived similar comments and she only received a C for the course. Spiteful and challenged, Levanda changed her major to marketing, a field where her writing, her talent for controlling and employing clichés, would be appreciated.

One Friday in early July, Levanda abandoned her work on the Dasani campaign for the week and left the office early. At the apartment, she dozed for an hour before she woke up, intent on a little exercise and food. She passed the zoo gate in Grant Park and followed the sidewalk towards Cherokee Street. The park was crowded. A pair of yuppie joggers in blue sweat-suits and white tennis shoes passed her on the trail. A group of kids with long hair and hemp necklaces sat on a patchwork quilt under a shady Shumard Oak. A girl in burgundy turban played a flute while the others ate couscous with their hands. A wheat-blond woman walked her cocker spaniel along the trails and greeted Levanda as she passed.

Sticking to the sidewalk, Levanda moved down Cherokee Street, past an Italian restaurant, rows of 1870s homes with flowering gardens, and the I-20 overpass. As Cherokee Street emptied into 11th in front of Oakland Cemetery, Levanda's skin shone with sweat. Atlanta suffocated in July heat. Six Feet Under Pub sat on the corner, facing the cemetery, and spilled the odor of hush puppies and beer into the air.

Levanda entered the restaurant and before a waitress could seat her, she spotted a man in the corner with paper-bag brown hair and square glasses. He was reading *Creative Loafing* and sipping on a Sweet Water 420. She knew it was Pete.

"Class of ninety-four," Levanda said as she slipped into the vacant seat at Pete's table. Startled, he looked up from the paper and glimpsed the visitor.

"Jesus Christ, Levanda Morris?" he blurted and folded the paper.

She smiled. She had been Levanda Richardson for nearly five years. It was nice to be called by her old name.

"How the hell are you? Jesus, look at you—little Vandy Morris all grown up! Still playing the old horn?"

As cliché as it sounds, it was unreal how things moved from there. He ordered them some food—an appetizer sampler and two salads, both with ranch and no cucumbers—and then some drinks. "Double Labrot and Graham bourbon on the rocks and whatever the lady'd like." The lady ordered a glass of Pinot Noir. She picked the one with the hardest pronunciation.

After two drinks, he insisted he was done, but ordered Levanda another for "good measure."

"So," he began, sucking on one of the ice cubes from his bourbon. "I have to ask, are you dating anybody?"

Levanda hesitated. "No," she answered, pulling her ring off under the table. He hadn't seen it, had it? "I'm not dating anyone."

She dropped the jewel into her purse. She wasn't exactly lying. Harry hadn't taken her on a date since she was pregnant. They ate at a little musty Italian place in a strip mall. Between

the undercooked spaghetti and dry tiramisu, he slid a ring box across the table, the K-Mart sticker still clinging to the bottom. She said "yes" and spent the rest of the night, hovering over the toilet in his cramped, apartment bathroom, reliving the undercooked spaghetti.

Levanda asked Pete to take her to the zoo on Saturday. Normally, she would've gone home for the weekend, but she had so much to do for work that she couldn't possibly drive the two hours there and back.

She wanted to see the pandas. How cliché. Everybody wanted to see the pandas. She couldn't help herself.

"Why pandas? They're not real bears," Peter said as he reclined against the concrete panda building. He nibbled at his thumb nail.

"Yes they are, Pete. They're real bears and one of them is pregnant. Do you know what a big deal it is for a panda to be pregnant? They show it on CNN, even."

"How old is your daughter?"

Levanda pushed up to the glass. "She's four," she replied softly. "And none of your business." "I got a newsletter a few years back, right before the ten year reunion that you didn't go to. Class of ninety-four," he drawled. "And under the class news, it said, 'Mrs. Levanda Richardson, formerly Ms. Levanda Morris, welcomed daughter, Devon Reese, in April of last year.' Devon Reese, pretty name. I couldn't help but remember it."

Levanda cried when she found out she was pregnant. She cried throughout her pregnancy. She cried that night after the undercooked spaghetti, the fat tears plopping into the toilet. She cried that night after the zoo. Peter, with his soft wren-brown eyes and gentle hand on the small of her back, was having an affair with a married woman and he knew it.

The sex with Peter was amazing, especially compared to broken-backed Harry who wallowed beneath her, told her to "be easy," and often asked her to stop before she could enjoy herself. The weekend before Levanda saw Pete at Six Feet Under, Harry fell asleep—snoring asleep—as she rocked against him. His pain pills worked quickly, and she learned to also. The only thing she'd gotten from sex with Harry, was a four-year-old and good legs. Pete only knew about the legs and they impressed him, though he never gave her a chance to use them.

So the sex with Peter was amazing, yes. But for all it's stilted hormones and marital rebellion, it seemed so cliché. On the first night, after they left Six Feet Under, he took her to his home in Decatur. As they pushed into the dark entry hall, she fell into him, not coquettishly like one might drop a handkerchief, but carelessly as if she were diving into cold water. She plunged into the affair and there, with her cheeks stinging, her arms wading, her lungs gasping, she felt awakened, livened, and new.

Then she drowned. Peter and Levanda seldom held a conversation. It was all Pinot Noir and the missionary position in his bed, on his couch, on the hood of his Camry—God, had they had sex any other way? At least he wasn't falling asleep on her or asking about the ring that tinkled out of her purse and onto the floor one evening when he cleared the dining room table to set up mission.



But after three months and two weeks exactly, he woke her in the middle the night. "Vandy," he murmured, sliding his fingers up along her thigh and stomach until he reached her breasts. He pinched a nipple. Her eyes flicker open. "Vandy?"

"Hmph?" she groaned and swatted at his fingers as if they were a fly.

"What are you?"

She lay silent. He moved his hand and laid it palm-down over her bellybutton.

"I mean, what do you do? I can't believe I don't even know what you do for a living."

"I don't know what you do either," she muttered. CLICHÉ!—watch what you say! Don't regurgitate! And she rubbed the bridge of her nose between her thumb and index.

"I'm an economic analyst for CNN. I'm not on camera, but I'm the guy with the numbers."

Levanda rested her hand on her forehead. "I work as a marketing consultant at a firm call Burlett & Berlette."

"Really?" he scoffed. "I thought you wanted to be a writer."

Levanda rolled onto her side. His hand slipped off her torso. "Your hand's hot."

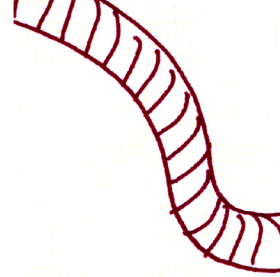
"Well, it's cold in here. It's October. Can't sleep naked with the windows open anymore. I just thought you'd like me to hold you."

"It's not cold," she replied. "Wear some clothes if you're cold, get the blanket—something. Just don't touch. I'm burning up."

Her starry-blue eyes welled with puddles of salty water until one single tear slipped from the corner of her eye and down her cheek like a river carved land. She was mad as a buzzing hornet. She wanted Don to rescue her like a prince on a white horse, charging to her aid and calling for her hand, but he didn't.

Pete fell silent. Levanda fell back asleep and woke up after three months, two weeks, and one day of having an affair with the first chair tenor sax player in her high school symphonic band. She dressed and went to work. Mr. Burlett peeped into her office. He tugged on his mole as he stole a gaze at the hem of her skirt. "We've schedule the final Dasani presentation for next Thursday," he said. She nodded.

Levanda left work at four-thirty and walked down Peachtree Street towards the parking garage where she left her car. She calculated. Three months, two weeks, and one day. She thought she might go home for the weekend, listen to Devon sing songs about her father, rub her hands along the crooked curves of Harry's back, sleep in the back bedroom of the white craftsmen home on the north shore of the Tennessee river, but she decided to head toward the zoo instead.





# CHARLIE SHEPARD

JOSH AND JEREMY

oil, graphite, colored pencil, and charcoal on canvas







# GEORGE CONLEY, JR.

## CLEANING HOUSE

The blue glow spilling from the trashcan in my living room  
Giving me mental cramps  
Images of army camps and TV commercial tramps  
Evade my minds attempt to find nothing  
Something is about to happen  
My eyes are filling up and running over with bullshit  
One drop at a time  
I remember every lie I ever heard or told  
Forced to un-crack the egg I un-hypnotize myself  
I remember the best way to see the sun is to close your eyes  
I remember smelling salt from the ocean the first time  
I remember thinking I might actually be free  
I remember my father yelling  
"Cut off that TV and go climb a tree"  
My room is quiet save the hum from the blue box  
My 15 minutes of meditation is coming to an end  
I clean-up my living room by emptying the trash can

# KARMON FRENCH

NEED: BOXES

paper, polyurethane, spray paint









# MEGAN BARDOLPH

## BLIND DATE

You've never been on a blind date before. Well, there was that one time you went out with your roommate and his girlfriend and her friend and you ended up frenching her all night. The girl friend, not the girlfriend, of course. But that didn't really count. Now your ex, Jess, was setting you up with some chick named Debbie who worked at a downtown photo studio. Ever since Jess arranged the whole thing, you've been feeling a bit pasty inside and out. You can feel your organs turning into this strange substance, like applesauce only less tasty, and it makes you nervous. Lately, Jess has been all about being your "friend," like she really wants to help you find yourself. It's confusing and it makes you nervous. If your roommate had been the one to set it up, things might be different. Your roommate knows your type well: smart, confident, onion-shaped ass. But this is an entirely separate matter. Who is this Mystery Debbie, you wonder, and what should you wear on your first blind date? Khakis?

Jess calls later that night. "Don't worry," she says. "I've already gone over all the details with Debbie. She knows what to do. You're going to meet her at Moon Wok tomorrow at seven. It's the brand new lightless restaurant a couple of blocks east of that downtown photo studio I really like, the one where Debbie works."

"A lightless restaurant?" you ask.

"Yes. It's a restaurant with no lights," she says. "No lights, no windows, no candles. I went to their grand opening and was blown away by the place. Debbie wants to check it out. Please, don't worry. You'll get it when you get there."

You'll get it when you get there. That's what Jess tells you. But what could there possibly be to "get?"

You arrive at the restaurant shortly after seven. With a name like "Moon Wok," you expect it to be some trippy Chinese place, complete with plenty of eighties pop music and a disco ball-illuminated dance floor. You also strangely assume it to be connected to a cosmic bowling alley. An overpowering scent of vanilla or coconut incense pours out of the open door; maybe it's some new wave Thai food hangout. You've seen so many of them popping up in your neighborhood over the past year or so. Approaching the entrance, you see no movement, no light, and no sign of existence from the outside. You reach in your pocket to check the address. A shadow casts over your hand, and you lift your head to behold a gloomy, obscure presence, which has now appeared on the stoop. It's wearing a floor-length plain black cloak and tinted night-vision goggles over his eyes. His head is wrapped in a sarong-like contraption, complete with silly tassels hanging down in front of his face.



He flickers a quick, stern smile. "Welcome to Moon Wok. Will you be dining alone tonight?"

"Actually, I'm supposed to meet someone here," you giggle. "Her name's Debbie."

"She's already seated. Step inside, take hold of this tassel, and I'll bring you to your seat." He hands you part of his head-wrap and you can't believe this is happening. You enter the building and stay a step behind the host, his faint silhouette made apparent only by the dull, low-intensity green glo-lights, one coming from the base of each table. So in essence, the place is not completely free of light, and you can't wait to knowingly point this out to Jess later. But the lights provide little aide to illuminating any object in the restaurant.

You feel a jab at your upper arm. A passing server or patron has clipped you with his elbow, and now stops to excuse himself. You turn to accept his apology, dropping the sacred tassel; you didn't even see him coming. As you turn back, your host has disappeared. The silhouette in front of you has vanished. You panic. You try to focus your eyes on anything at all, but everything is an eternity of black sky polka-dotted with sheer, glowing green stars which now seem to rise up and swirl in circular patterns all around you. It's too late to turn around and try to find your way out of this disaster, so you just stand still, wondering what to do next. You find discomfort in the fact that even if you could see you wouldn't know who you were looking for.

A hand rests on your shoulder and your heart stops.

"I said take hold of the tassel," the host says mystically, placing it in your hand once again. "We are almost to your table."

You want to apologize and to ask him why the lights are off. You want to explain your confusion, but he's already started walking away. Six steps later, the host stops, and you hear the dull screech of chair legs on the floor.

"Here you are, sir." He now speaks mockingly and shoves something into your chest. "Here is your menu and wine list. You will find they are written in Braille. Enjoy your meal." You sit down and by way of the faint glow of the green light shimmering from the base of the table you begin to trace the outline of the body of the woman sitting across from you with your eyes. You take a deep breath, and you smell a light musk perfume steeped in the scent of vanilla or coconut incense; instantly, it reminds you of your childhood babysitter, who must have worn the same scent. You had the biggest crush on her in fourth grade.

"Greetings." Her voice is sultry and smooth. Wow, you think, she sounds hot. "I'm Debbie. I'd reach across the table to shake your hand, but I'm afraid I'd poke your eye out."

"That's all right, then," you reply. "Have you actually been here before? This place is ridiculous."

"I've walked by a few times. It always smells so intriguing. It only opened a couple of weeks ago. Jess told me I had to check it out. Seems like the most appropriate setting for our blind date, don't you think?"

"Tsch! I've never met anyone who took the phrase so literally. This is a very new experience for me." You feel her smile in response.

Someone approaches your table and asks if you would like to order a bottle of wine. You trace your fingers against the tiny bumps on what you assume to be the wine list, and, not surprisingly, nothing really seems to jump out at you. Neither of you know what to say, until the server finally recommends some Sangiovese, and you both agree that sounds fine. The server wants to take your order.

"I'm terribly sorry," you explain sarcastically, "I actually don't read Braille, believe it or not. I don't even know what kind of food you serve here. How bout a little help?" Your own voice sounds hollow and meaningless, and you hope Debbie doesn't notice. You ponder the role of the Moon Wok servers for a moment: how are they able to find their way around the restaurant? It must be those night-vision goggles, you conclude. They're probably just hovering over people's tables, spying on couples out on awkward first dates, like you and Debbie, silently laughing at the cautious and unasserted movements you make. Jess must have known they were all condescending jerks. Why did she have you meet here?

"Do you have any specials, or anything?" You hear Debbie ask the server. He lists the specials. It sounds like mostly Asian cuisine, with a few standard American items for the less-adventurous types. You're craving something exotic and order the Mongolian Beef, even though you've read somewhere that there's nothing actually "Mongolian" about the dish. Debbie orders a basket of breaded chicken fingers, and there is something comforting in the fact that you're sure that's what she orders at every restaurant.

The server leaves, or at least you assume he leaves, to put in your order.

"Is he gone?" you ask, reaching your arms out around the table to get a sense of your surroundings.

"What, do you think he's just going to sit and eavesdrop on our blind date?" Debbie teases you. "C'mon, don't you think he has better things to do?"

"I don't know. I would hope so." You have an idea. "Hey, what do you say we get out of here and maybe head to Applebee's? This place is like the Twilight Zone."

"We've already ordered! We can't just leave now. And plus," you felt her lean in toward you, "how would we find our way out of here? Can you imagine? We'd probably knock over a bunch of tables, trip a couple of servers carrying massive trays of food, run into a wall or two..." You both laugh at the thought of your great escape. "Just relax," she half-whispers, "from what I've heard, the wait is totally worth it."

You feel a surge of excitement as the server comes back with the bottle of wine. You both listen in silence to the sounds of the glasses set on the table, the pop of the cork, and the cascading of wine into glass. There is something erotic about sipping wine in the dark with a stranger.

You feel sexy and confident as you carefully reach across the table to find your wine glass. The force of your fingers pushing against the stem is just great enough to knock the glass over, sending the wine gushing in Debbie's directions. Shhh. Maybe she didn't notice.

"What was that sound?" She asks. "Did you spill something?"



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"What was that sound?" She asks. "Did you spill something?"

"Oh . . . I did. My wine, it's . . ."

"It's ok," she interrupts you. "It's not on me. Just give me a napkin or something so I can try to sop it up off the tablecloth, okay?" You fumble around the place-setting in front of you, and upon locating the napkin you try to pass it to her, searching for her hand for a few moments until you give up and gently toss it in over to her lap. You are such a smooth guy. And this must be the blind date from hell.

"Sorry about the wine," you mumble, feeling red-faced and uncomfortable. But then, as you hear her gently rubbing the linen napkin on the linen tablecloth, you begin to feel her foot sliding slowly up and down your leg. Or is that her foot sliding up and down the leg of the table? Either way, you feel tingly, thrilling vibrations run all the way through your body and assume that your apology has been accepted.

Your server comes back to refill your glass with wine. Carefully, you relocate your glass on the table and take your first sip of the Italian red. Usually, you're more of a Miller Lite drinker, but the Sangiovese was incredible. You'll have to tip at least 20 percent. You talk with Debbie about lots of things. You ask her to tell you about her job at the photo studio, and she starts talking about things you don't understand. So you nod, even though she can't see you, and try to imagine what her face looks like.

You're thinking dark brown hair, syrup-brown eyes, freckles splattered lightly across her nose and cheeks, and shiny peach gloss tinting perfectly shaped lips. A Sandra Bullock-type for sure.

What is it about sitting with someone in a lightless place that makes every single detail so sensual? You ponder this as you sit and chat with Debbie in the dark. You hear her shuffling for something in her purse, and you guess at what she is looking for. A disturbing thought crosses your mind: what happens if I need to use the restroom? You'd never find it without a flashlight or something. This, you conclude, is unavoidably a question you will have to ask your server.

A few minutes later, your food arrives and the server explains that if either of you need to use the restroom, a staff member will be happy to accompany you. Thanks, you reply. The tassel incident from earlier still has you feeling edgy and skittish. Even though you kind of have to go, you decide it safer to wait until you leave the restaurant. Debbie asks for a side of ranch dressing to go with her chicken strips.

You paw at the table, trying to locate misplaced silverware, and then you feel all around the edges of your plate to determine where the food ends and begins. Utensils in hand, you attempt to dig out a reasonably-sized bite of beef and rice, you bring meat to lips and take a bite. The food is unbelievable. Debbie asks if you'd like to try a chicken finger. She slides the basket across the table to you, miraculously avoiding all wine glasses. Even the chicken seems to melt in your mouth, and you're reminded of grade school when your teachers used to give you "space candy" in the shape of little UFOs that literally disappeared in your mouth. They didn't taste so great, but you've always wondered how they made this strange candy. It had seemed the most incredible invention as a child. You feel the same awe and



bewilderment as you now take your second sumptuous bite of beef. The meal progresses in silence.

For the first time, you notice the other sounds in the restaurant: you hear slow, soft, familiar piano tunes coming from out of nowhere. You don't know a lot about classical music, but you recognize one of the songs as that Chopin Nocturne that's in a lot of movies. There's another well-known piece that you can't quite place. It might be Debussy? George Gershwin? Would Debbie know? But everything feels so surreal and magical; you don't ask her. You'll ask her later. For now, you listen swimmingly to the other conversations going on around you.

Somewhere, there's a baby squealing. Who would bring a small child to a bizarre place like this, you wonder? Poor thing might never recover. Then, you hear another table, maybe three or four people, talking about baseball. Another conversation floats by – two men discussing the flavor of black olives. One emphatically loves them and eats them with every possible meal; the other says he can only tolerate black olives, but green olives are far more delicious. A familiar female voice pierces their stimulating conversation:

"Black, green, purple, whatever. I won't touch any kind of olive. Pickles, on the other hand..."

"Jess?" You didn't mean to say it out loud. Somehow, your ex is in the restaurant. She's checking up on you! This is unbelievable. But the olive conversation is gone.

"Did you say 'Jess'?" Debbie asks.

"She's here. I just heard her talking about olives. I think she's up to something," you say.

Clearly annoyed, Debbie sighs loudly. "You are the most paranoid person I've met. Jess is not here. I think she went out of town for the weekend."

"She's here," you fume. "Let's get out of here, let's go somewhere else."

"But we haven't ordered dessert yet." Debbie complains.

"I don't like this monkey business Jess is trying to pull."

"Fine. Let's go. You need to get over her." Debbie is not happy. The server comes back to clear your plates, and you ask for the bill.

Minutes later, you're walking outside and shielding your eyes from the sun, realizing how desperately you have to pee. Even though it's almost 8:30 and the sun is low in the sky, it takes several moments for you to remove your hand from your forehead, and when you do, everything looks pale and washed-out and incredibly unattractive. You get your first real look at Debbie. She's clearly not your type. She also has a huge red wine stain on the front of her dress, along with a few splotches of ranch dressing down one side. But then you look down at your own attire and you've made quite a mess of yourself as well. You are embarrassed for her and for yourself. You bid each other an awkward farewell when you walk her to her car. And actually, you wouldn't have minded hanging out for a bit, but the chemistry you sensed earlier has somehow vanished in the light, and she's complaining about a head-

ache and how much her feet hurt in those shoes, and the last thing you want to deal with is another whiner, so you let her go.

You think about going home, but instead you find an alley to pee in and return to the front of the restaurant to wait for Jess to leave. The host eyes you suspiciously as you pace the length of the building. It was her, you tell yourself. You're convinced you heard her. Forty-five minutes pass, and no Jess. The host tells you they're closing up, and you walk back to your car. Was it all in your head?

The next day, you call Jess to thank her cynically for the eye-opening experience and for being such a good friend, and you assure her that Moon Wok and Debbie and the whole incident taught you everything you need to know about yourself.

"I'm glad, I'm so glad," she responds. "You know I'm here to help you out when you need it. We're always going to be friends. Listen, I'm out of town for work until Tuesday. Lunch at Moon Wok sometime next week?"



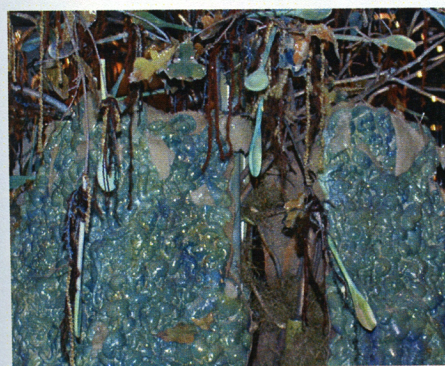


# ASHLEY FOLKNER

SEASON

mixed media







# MATT ADAMS

CICADA'S SONG

lithograph with coffee and conté





# EMILIA PHILIPS

## LOOKING BACK AT NEW YEAR'S EVE

two thousand and five

The last bite out of the year is rotten.

As the sky peels night from plums and settles into its new color like its an easy chair, we burn dead pine in front of the living. The stalks, stiff and arrogant in their foliage, seem not to notice or care. I'm not sure I would either.

The popping and flexing of wood echoes across the frosted field and the wind busts my lip the way burning pine impales the air. He used to call me Grace, but you read my birth certificate. My sweater of silence

is the only thing keeping me warm out here, though I do appreciate your arms draped around me and the whisperings of the trees. Uyotsvhi, uyotsvhi.

We couldn't kiss in front of my father, because his hands were too stiff to cover his eyes, peach-pit eyes that looked like they'd been imprisoned behind glasses for years and seen too many young girls kissing. A siren crows in the distance and blackbirds swallow their nests whole. The last bite out of the year is sweet and swollen like my bottom lip.

We should have burned ourselves, too, or splintered ourselves into pieces for dogs and blackbirds to eat.

Grace loves watching things burn, the smoldering of matter to ash and gas and stars, the combustion of time in the fires of another year coming.

# JESSICA MARTIN

IT'S NOT A DREAM: FEAR OR LAZINESS  
oil on canvas

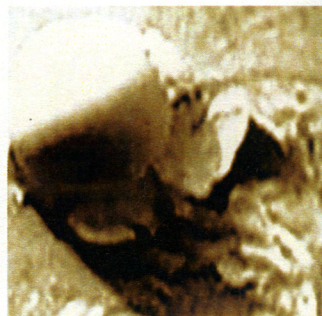
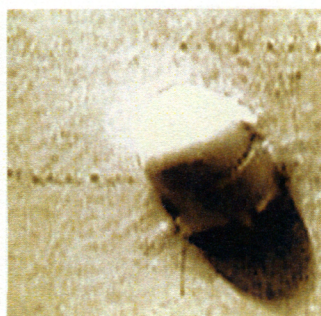




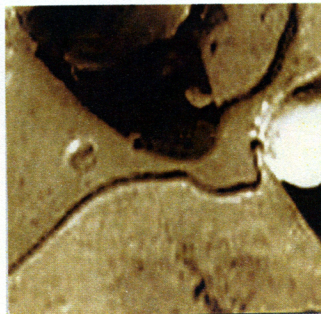
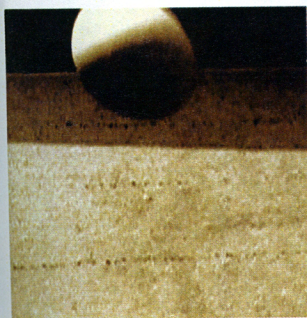
# MCKINLEY BRYSON

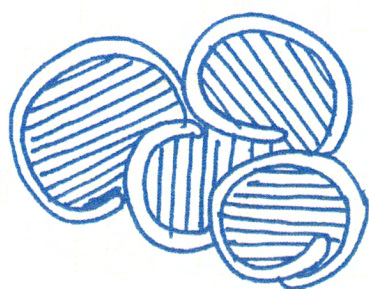
EGG PROGRESSION

video stills / digital output











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